THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

A NEW VISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Evolution of Divergent Models of Religious Education Towards a Convergence Based Upon New Metaphors

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis re-examines the philosophical basis of religious education. It explores the historical assumption that the two models of R.E., confessional and non-confessional, exist in opposition to each other. This assumption is questioned and found unsatisfactory by means of a critical review and development of selected theorists, among them Hull, Grimmitt, Groome and Moran. It is argued that the two models can be more convergent and consistent with each other than previously envisaged.

The possibilities of further convergence are tested in two ways. First, there is a discussion of the work of the confessionalist Thomas Groome alongside two non-confessionalists, Michael Grimmitt and Alex Rodger. Next, there is a documentary and statistical analysis of the agreement between the two models in practice in the Scottish system. Both tests reveal substantial agreement between the models together with some theoretical and practical factors which will impede any full convergence both now and in future.

The thesis offers a new vision for the subject, using metaphors from psychotherapy and liberation theology. These metaphors are applied to R.E.'s internal dynamics between pupils, teacher, religions, faith communities, and the wider society. In the conclusion, some unresolved issues and remaining tasks are identified.

DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own, and that the thesis has been written by me.

Mark F. T. Chater

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NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

Roman Catholic and Catholic: I use the former phrase to refer to a particular church, e.g. *the Roman Catholic authorities sponsored a textbook.* The single word Catholic is used only to refer to the tradition, and to theologies within it, not to the church. This distinction is made for ecumenical reasons.

Denominational: My most frequent use of this word is to refer to Roman Catholic schools or documents. I am not particularly happy with the hidden connotations of the word, stressing separateness; but I have used it in preference to the longer and clumsier phrase *Roman Catholic.* In rare cases, I use *denominational* to refer to other religious schools, such as Jewish or Islamic, or their controlling bodies, but this is made clear in the text.

Confessional: I develop a distinct sense of a living tradition when using this word to refer to the historical and present practice of religious education in faith contexts (usually but not always Christian), and its associated philosophical and theological underpinning. Unlike some theorists, I mean no criticism when I use the word. A *confessionalist* is one who works and believes within the context of a confessional tradition. *Non-confessional* and *non-confessionalist* refer to religious education and educators outwith faith contexts.

The Inclusive Language Issue: I have followed the established practice of trying to avoid the use of *he, him, man* and *mankind* when speaking generally. When use of a singe pronoun is unavoidable, I have used both *he* and *she*, sometimes in the same sentence, to emphasise inclusiveness. When quoting, I have left gender-exclusive language unaltered.

Acronyms used in the text and in footnotes:

C.C.C.	Consultative Council on the Curriculum (as was)
C.E.C.S.	Catholic Education Commission (Scotland)
COPE	Committee On Primary Education
C.S.Y.S.	Certificate of Sixth Year Studies
H.M.I.	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
R.E.	Religious Education
R.S.	Religious Studies
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
S.C.C.C.	Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum
SCCORE	Scottish Consultative Committee On Religious Education
SCOTVEC	Scottish Vocational Education Council
S.E.B.	Scottish Examination Board
S.E.D.	Scottish Education Department (as was)
S.O.E.D.	Scottish Office Education Department (as was)
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TESS	Times Education Supplement (Scotland)
THES	Times Higher Education Supplement

Digest of Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR CONVERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MODELS

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR CONVERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MODELS

1. Divergent Models?

> "Conceptions of the nature of R.E. may be divided into those which emphasise religious education as a religious activity and those which emphasise it as an educational activity..." (1)

In the above quotation, two models of religious education are presented: that of religion studied from *within* a faith community, from a *confessional* stance (described as a religious activity), and that of religion studied from *outwith*, from an *objective* or *non-confessional* stance (described as an educational activity). Many practitioners and writers on the subject have assumed the existence of these two models in their mental image or design of the subject (2); many have assumed that the two models are separate or even mutually exclusive.

In this thesis, I question the validity of the assumption of two separate models. I suggest that the two models, although divergent historically, need to

and can converge to form one new model of religious education. I seek to evaluate the extent of convergence in terms of theories and practice of religious education, and I argue for a new convergent vision.

In the present period, I am not the first to suggest a critical look at the two models and their mutual relationship: John Hull's work, among others, suggests a mutual interest [3]. He suggests that the differences between the two models might be less than contradictory. It is a suggestion which appeals to my own personal experience, and finds agreement with the explorations of other theorists. But I have been unable to find any theorist or practitioner who takes the questioning of the two models, and the possibility of convergence, as far as I do.

If we assume two models of religious education, we can draw up a rough-and-ready list of those names for the subject which are normally used to describe the study of religion from *within* a faith community: Religion, Religious Education, Religious Instruction, Catechesis; and to describe the study of religion from an *objective* stance: Religious Education, Religious and Moral Education, and Religious Studies.

We notice that the term "Religious Education" is common to both lists, and is in fact used as a generic

name. Moreover, some denominational schools are now calling their R.E. departments "Religious Studies" (4) or even "Religious and Human Studies" (5). The fact that the lists have common ground suggests that the two models of religious education touch each other, and may even coincide at some points, so that despite their undoubted divergence, they have enough in common to suggest an underlying convergence.

My personal interest in a theory of convergence springs from my experience as a religious educator. Having taught the subject in both confessional and non-confessional contexts, I have frequently found myself in a dialogue over the theory and rationale of the models. The dialogue has ranged from mutual exploration of ideas, through friendly jousting to open criticism (6). Gradually I have evolved a belief that there can be a comprehensive human theory for religiously educating the pupil in school, and that the subject could benefit from greater clarity on this point.

If it is to be found, such a theory needs to take root in specific soil. Therefore a brief analysis of the Scottish, and to lesser extents the English and global contexts, is necessary to identify the pressures and opportunities in which religious education lives, and to which it can respond.

2. The Context

In this section, various factors affecting religious education are briefly described and analysed for their influence. The main influencing factors are organised under three headings: national, educational and religious factors.

(a) The National Context

The Scottish context undeniably contributes to unique religious and cultural conditions. As an entity distinct from England, yet part of the United Kingdom, Scotland generates these conditions from its past and its present, sharing a distinctive sense of nationhood expressed through culture, political structures - including an education system in which Scots take pride - and an image of itself.

Religious conditions both affect and are affected by Scottish identity. There is wide-scale attachment to the Kirk as the national church (7). Yet despite its dominant position statistically, the Kirk is in long-term decline, with membership falling from from 1.27 million in 1951 to 787,000 in 1990 (8). The decline in numbers is commented on and analysed by a minister who charts a corresponding decline in the Kirk's influence over doctrine and morality (9). Secularisation in

Scotland affects also its attitudes to its own heritage and culture [10]. Despite this decline, the Kirk is identified as an institution and even to some extent a mouthpiece of Scotland's distinctive identity [11].

Through its own hierarchy and commissions, the Roman Catholic church has also given voice to Scottish issues. While some of this focuses on the interest in preserving Roman Catholic schools, for instance in the face of local government reform [12], it also addresses a range of other issues such as housing, unemployment, taxation, sexuality and family life. Therefore despite their declining statistical positions [13], both these churches together with others speak for a certain image of distinctive Scottish identity.

Religious divisions have also been a characteristic of Scotland, affecting its popular culture and its educational efforts. The substantial Irish immigration of the mid- nineteenth century challenged, for the first time since the Reformation, a Protestant hegemony in Scotland. The majority community was, for theological and racial reasons, at first ill-disposed to the immigrant community. This type of prejudice lingered on into recent times [14]. The Roman Catholic participation in new ecumenical structures, combined with the sense of having a common enemy in the form of 1980s and 1990s government policy, has further

challenged but not altogether eliminated the heritage of religious suspicion. One focus for this suspicion is the existence of denominational schools [15]. Fuelled by the football culture, religious and sectarian bigotry can emerge among pupils. especially in metropolitan areas.

Secular organisations also carry messages about the public good and seek to influence Scottish society - particularly through its schools - in certain directions, for instance against racism [16].

These distinctive conditions of the Scottish nation affect the climate for religious education. Both church and educational structures function as foci for national self-esteem and thus exercise an influence in anthropological terms. The heritage of religious division is deep, and although it is usually thought to be slowly diminishing, it persists in popular culture and in arguments about denominational education, both of which directly affect pupils. Religious consciousness is distinctive, carrying both positive and negative codes about human meaning, Scottishness, and individual worth. These codes influence the self-identity and community awareness of teachers, parents and pupils.

(b) The Educational Context

Long-established British-wide assumptions governing the curriculum and methods are being challenged, overtaken but not completely destroyed by new market-oriented initiatives and values, leaving all participants in the system, including Christian educators, unsure about the definition of their work and its future direction.

Those assumptions include the place of the individual at the heart of education and the concept of the all-round developed individual, notions associated with liberal theory and emerging in the nineteenth century [17]. Peters and Hirst develop liberal theory in terms of worthwhileness from the child's point of view, critical thinking, and teacher responsibility [18]. The "revolt" of liberal against authoritarian education is seen as "salutary" but is open to criticism for, among other points, its weakness on content, flight from moral responsibility, and unwillingness to listen to the demands of society [19]. Many of these criticisms are being revived in the era of Conservative rule. Under pressure from these criticisms, from various social forces, and from its own internal evolution, liberal educational theory has mutated in many ways, and has a weakened hold on the system.

Under the liberal philosophy, learning and teaching approaches have moved gradually but steadily away from the traditional and towards the pupil-centred end of the spectrum. Techniques such as individualised learning, owing something to the Montessori method [20], are also to some extent implicit in the ethos of new curricular initiatives such as Standard Grade and 5-14.

Pupil-centred learning has not had it all its own way among educationalists. Some manifestations of it are criticised as loose, trivial, ephemeral, irrelevant and even morally unacceptable, as well as capable of combining with temporary need to produce a superficial, "magpie" curriculum [21].

The consensus around liberal theory began to be vulnerable when its educational results were criticised. Liberalism pointed to economic stringencies and political priorities which, it argued, had contributed to its failure in the delivery of its high aims [22]. A responsive mutation in the liberal emphasis led to less stress on cognitive content, more on skills, and greater emphasis on contextual aspects such as the social environment [23]. There has also been theological criticism [24], yet a moral role for education was and remains a shared liberal tenet,

usually expressed in terms of moral rationality or social cohesion [25].

Among the many factors influencing twentieth century education, increasing importance is attached to vocational education, and the extension of the school's function beyond academic learning to every aspect of the child's life [26]. These processes continue. The vocational dimension is represented in the recent introduction of TVEI, work experience placements, pupil enterprise, SCOTVEC and SVQ awards, and credit accumulation schemes, as well as the development of academic subjects such as keyboarding skills and the variety of Business Studies qualifications. The personal dimension is represented in the emergence of programmes on drugs, health, and social education, as well as national initiatives such as Guidance teachers, the 5-14 Personal and Social Development guidelines, and Values Education.

The extensive growth of science and technology in the curriculum, and of curricular and extra-curricular activities related more or less directly to the personal and vocational priorities mentioned above, has not taken place without debate. While the stress on vocational and technological elements is symptomatic of the market model, and the equally strong stress on

personal elements indicates that the liberal model is holding ground and evolving to suit pupils' needs. Meanwhile, traditional subject-based views of teaching still remain strong in the secondary phase.

The new force of market thinking in education is gaining ground; its underlying philosophy is rarely explicitly stated, but some of its characteristics - rapid innovation and the development of business and management approaches in education - have been a cause of concern. Analogies from business, and the high priority given to economic criteria, are two negative factors identified by a researcher (27). Several other criticisms have been made (28). The focus on quality assurance in various forms has become a major occupation in virtually every school. The attempt to raise standards is felt to be driven by economic and political factors among others. Some commentators have worried about the effects of enterprise model thinking on the ethos and on the human spirit within education (29).

The force and speed of other social changes means that education, and the Christian role within it, are in a time of rapid and unclear change. Palmer mentions just some global forces acting on education: secularism, nationalism, the multi-ethnic society with its direct effect on school rolls, and the loss of

school control over the curriculum [30].

Despite the strength of the market approach, no single philosophy of education has a dominating position, and rapid change is happening without any clear vision or consensus about the direction and purpose of the education system.

This unresolved situation is arguably a contest between visions of education as liberal/personal or as functional/social/instrumental. There is a feeling that education for social ends will normally, in the present climate, mean politically conservative ends.

The application of the market model, if it continues, will probably carry education very far from liberal theory. It is not easy, nowadays, to find many educationalists who can make sense of Whitehead's dictum that "the essence of education is that it be religious" [31]. The liberal educational ideal has been weakened, through an accidental combination of philosophical and theological critiques with economic and political counter-measures. In a time of rapid educational development, no clear philosophy has emerged to supersede it, but many decisions are taken and policies made on market and business models, which are themselves the focus of much controversy and criticism.

(c) The Religious Context

The consensus is that society is secular and secularising, and that this has an inevitable effect on pupils' attitudes [32]. The churches continue to be concerned over declining membership, with two hundred Scots leaving the churches every week on average [33]. But secularisation is a catch-all word often used to describe both trends in thought and patterns of commitment arising from the weakened condition of religious institutions; this one word is sometimes used in shorthand to sum up the entire array of intellectual and social forces attacking religion. Arguments over secularisation continue, with many thinkers calling its reality, or its importance, into question [34].

The relatively weak position of religious belief today has been attributed to the history of critiques of religion, whether scientific, political, social or psychological, but this process is questionable [35].

Other critical movements within and beyond the churches have affected young people's consciousness of religion. Feminism, with its varying manifestations, is one such force [36]. The impact of the feminist critique of religion is felt both institutionally (through organisations such as Ministry of Wholeness,

formerly the Movement for the Ordination of Women, the Catholic Women's Network, and the Catholic Renewal Movement) and theologically (through the the feminist quest for more experiential and inclusive spiritualities). All the manifestations of feminist theology may be said to influence the climate for religious education. The influence has been three-fold, creating expectations of gender equality, producing numbers of parents whose relationship with the church and, therefore, with religious education may be characterised by suspicion, and generating a critique of the general curriculum (37).

The impact of biblical criticism is another factor influencing religious awareness. The critical movement emerged as a discipline within the Jewish and Christian traditions, traceable to Spinoza, and involving figures as diverse as Pusey, Robertson Smith, Loisy and the modernists, and Schweitzer. The widespread and unclear use of the word "myth" is a powerful factor in weakening religious belief. Frequently, biblical criticism has weakened faith, but has not done all it could to substitute discredited models of faith with alternatives (38).

Another factor which has weakened religious structures is the authority debate, particularly in the Roman Catholic context. This debate, with its

accompanying conservative-radical confrontation, is both the cause and the effect of changing attitudes to authority [39], especially among young people. Many teachers have observed how young pupils in Religious Education classes are simply not inclined to accept authoritative statements (on matters such as sexual ethics) uncritically, as their forbears were.

Three comments may be made on the impact of these forces in general. First, the forces have come little short of traumatising the Christian religion, and have certainly placed it on the defensive [40]. Second, perhaps the points considered above as attacks on Christianity are also attacks on other world-views involving a transcendental or mythical dimension [41]; further, perhaps they are also attacks on the philosophical basis of religious education in schools.

The effects of the various critical onslaughts on religion have been reported as "very severe" [42]. How religions in general, and especially the Christian religion, have coped with these various powerful challenges is a highly relevant factor for the communication of religious ideas in the classroom; the future of religion itself may depend on it [43]. Much post-modern theology reconstructs itself in a way which welcomes diversity and plurality, not only in its

theological models [44] but also in the educational communities within church governance [45]. However, this acceptance of plurality is not whole-hearted in the Christian tradition, and can show signs of confusion. Commenting on the plural scene in the context of catechesis, one thinker appears to regret that the Church can no longer unite in opposition to a main antagonist [46].

The religious communities have responded to plurality and secularism in a wide variety of ways. Tracy's study of plurality focuses widely on language and culture [47] and describes a number of interpretive responses (hermeneutics) which he sees at work. My discussion of the hermeneutic responses he names, with my addition of some others, serves to illustrate religion's responses to its critiques.

Tracy's hermeneutic of explanation [48] is that which attempts to explain religion, sometimes reducing or explaining away in the process. Examples include the sociology, psychology and anthropology of religion; we might add some aspects of phenomenology which have been translated into school-based religious education. His hermeneutics of critique and of suspicion [49] have used critical tools in order to change or challenge religion. His several examples include masters of suspicion such as Freud and Marx; we could add the

"death of God" theologians, black theology, some biblical criticism [50] and post-Christian feminism. These hermeneutic responses leave little comfort for the traditional believer and, when applied with school children, may be a chilling and antiseptic experience.

Tracy's hermeneutic of retrieval is that which attempts, in non-fundamentalist terms, to reinstate and reassert statements of faith which are consistent with belief in the transcendent. Tracy offers, as exemplars, Barth, Eliade, Jung and Rahner [51].

To Tracy's four response strategies, I add four others which I see at work, and which also affect pupils.

A hermeneutic of reconstruction is seen in the work of Buber, Bonhoeffer, Christian feminism, liberation theology and other movements. Here theology attempts to give a positive response to particular types of critique, while accepting the critical tools used and many of the points made. Often the effort of this response involves radical reconstruction of the Christian theological superstructure [52]. Reconstruction is also seen in the call by one educator to recognise the precious values and truths which lie in the secular, and to use their language in our reconstruction of Christianity [53]. This hermeneutic

may also include aspects of movements such as ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, both seeking understanding and perhaps integration (54).

A hermeneutic of fundamentalism, be it Islamic, Christian or of any other tradition, usually does not try to reconcile scientific and other forms of learning with its model of faith but is often suspicious of intellectual approaches in general (55). Fundamentalist political attitudes and authority patterns usually bolster and depend upon the anti-intellectual hermeneutic (56). Fundamentalism forms an important feature in the religious context for religious education, operating on the levels of parental influence, teacher influence, and pupil awareness through the media.

Finally, I use the notion of a hermeneutic of apathy to describe the strategy of Christians and others who, while avoiding fundamentalist positions, have no clear response to critiques, and instead use, if anything, a patchwork of other hermeneutics held together by a provisional and individualistic faith (57). I believe that this strategy is used by many, especially young people; it may be associated with the concept of moral relativism which has entered public educational debate (58).

These hermeneutic strategies have enormous significance for religious education. The content of a child's religious commitment is important, but so also is the manner in which the child holds the commitment. The interpretive strategies the child uses (and sees others using) in response to a plural world of conflicting ideas will crucially affect that child's inner development and outer skills. For instance, if children learn only a hermeneutic of fundamentalism, this may, in the end, weaken or shatter religious faith [59]; and - an equal, if not greater danger - if they only learn a hermeneutic of critique or of suspicion, this may in the end dry up the wells of their spirits [60].

There is an argument that the weakening of religious thought has not reduced human religious needs and impulses, which are as great as ever [61]. David Hay's empirical research indicated high incidences of religious experience in Britain [62] but his definition of religious experiences is wide enough to be questionable [63]. There is other research to support the general idea of widespread religious experience as a human characteristic [64]. Human religiosity is often contrasted with organised religion, the latter having less credibility, especially among the young [65].

Religion, though widely discredited, is a constant or even an increasing topic of interest. The persistence of religion is ascribed to its telling a story which helps some people to oppose life-denying forces: and this persistence is matched, in the public domain, by an abiding support for religious education in the curriculum, even among those parents who have given up any faith practice (66).

The complex set of circumstances which make up the context for religious education cannot be easily summarised. The three factors discussed here affect each other; however, other, more general and usually global factors also form part of the context for teaching, learning and values. I now turn to these factors.

3. General Perspectives and Factors Affecting the Context

The emergence of a range of professions, research insights and social movements has affected the professional self-understanding of religious educators, and shed light on the lives of their pupils. The number of factors at work here is huge, and can only be touched on; I have selected only a few and argued that they have special relevance. No discussion of the context can legitimately ignore the influence of these

three factors at least. Arguably many other factors, omitted here, are also relevant.

Developmental psychology, with its focus on cognitive, emotional, moral and spiritual growth, forms an important part of the background. Moral or religious specialists have contributed their own theories (67), which are not rehearsed here, but have influenced the work of religious educators; the analysis made by Fowler in relation to his second and third stages, and his suggestion of wide-scale adult retardation at stage 3, are particularly noteworthy (68).

The theories contain implications for the personal needs of the teacher, and therefore for the effectiveness of religious learning. This is a concern which brings the two "models" and "sectors" together. Questions about the maturity of the teacher, his ability to deal with questioning, and the quality of her own personal journey, can logically be raised in both sectors if developmental theories are taken seriously (69).

Developmental theories can also influence learning and teaching approaches, encouraging moves away from mere description and towards the fostering of personal growth. Confessionalists and non-confessionalists alike have shown awareness of this (70).

From these theories we draw a tentative conclusion that religious education as a process needs to orient itself towards developmental growth in some way [71] which unites knowing and being. But acceptance of the educational relevance of developmental theories as ways of understanding young people and structuring their educational experience, though widespread, is not universal [72], and this disagreement takes on considerable significance in my later discussion of the possibility of convergence [73].

Young people's attitudes to religion are discussed not only by developmentalists but also by sociology, religious education and theology. This considerable body of research cannot be summarised here, but much of it has found that young people are deeply critical of their religious instruction, and mixed in their understanding of central Christian beliefs and values [74]; more recent research has revealed pupils questioning the place of the subject in the curriculum [75]. This suggests an increasing scepticism among children in relation to the claims of religious traditions even during a period when religious education has shifted its focus towards the interests of the child; but it leaves unexplored the attitudes towards religious experience [76].

My discussion of the context must include a necessarily brief and broad mention of environmental and political factors as they impact on the consciousness of the young.

James Fowler speaks of "images of promise and peril" which shape human consciousness at the present time (77). He suggests that six such images have a particular bearing on consciousness as it affects young people: the promise of expanded choice, with its attending peril of homeless minds and hearts; the promise of increased global awareness, with its attending peril of fractured relationships and identity; the promise of medical and technological mastery, with its attending perils of new ills, escalating costs and maldistribution of services (to these perils, one might add those of increased expectations and wish-fulfillment); the promise of nuclear disarmament, with its attending peril of more proliferation (to this peril, one might add that of instability); the promise of a revival of religion and the pluralism of faiths, with its attending perils of rigidity, exclusivism, and false consciousness, summed up in the phrase "privatised systems of meaning" (78). The sixth and last of Fowler's images is one of peril alone, namely the environmental crisis.

Fowler detects a new, positively relativist religious consciousness which prioritises global unity and the integrity of creation (79). Such hopes are, I believe, positive ones, and are shared to some extent by young people, whose natural sense of tolerance, justice and compassion is easily observed by the teacher.

Young people are also aware of religious pluralism; children achieve this knowledge earlier and more deeply because of changes in religious education and, perhaps, the information revolution. Awareness of this sort changes the child's cultural assumptions (80). It may produce attitudes considered to be negative, such as relativism, and positive, such as toleration, inseparably. It is a pointer to human growth, especially growth from Fowler's stages 2 to 3 and from 4 to 5, when attitudes to religious truth begin to open up.

Consumerism, as a global movement of thought and behaviour, is recognised as exercising a strong influence on the young. Children's and young people's attitudes to consumerism will often be ambiguous, combining general moral attitudes with specific lifestyle desires and susceptibility to pressures (81). Other results of consumerism may, according to the religious experience school of thought, be the blunting

of emotions and also - in cases of chronic poverty - the blunting of natural religious awareness (82). The counselling profession adds an insight that young people may react to consumerism with hardened attitudes and increased scepticism towards any claims (83). The end result may be the reduction of all attitudes to world views to the level of *homo consumens*, a picker and chooser of meanings according to personal taste and convenience. There a recognition of the natural spirituality in children which would resist these forces, coupled with a realisation of how spirituality tends to be suppressed, perhaps by values associated with consumerism among others (84).

This brief analysis of the context cannot be a catalogue of all contextual factors, but has discussed national, educational, religious and global movements of thought, associated structures, and patterns of rapid change. A contextual study is not designed for drawing conclusions, but for establishing an understanding of some factors which form part of the subsequent argument on convergence. A detailed study of the historical process which gave us the two models is undertaken in chapter 2. Perhaps all that can be said as summary is that many complex and strong pressures affect the learner, the teacher, and their common environment; that these pressures include attacks on

religion, a decline in institutional religious practice, a global thirst for authentic spirituality and a set of unprecedented spiritual, cultural and social perils; and that the atmosphere of change and questioning built up by these pressures needs to and can result in a re-evaluation of the two models of religious education.

4. The Theory of Convergence

My central line of argument is that, although religious education has diverged into confessional and non-confessional models historically, this division is no longer satisfactory (85); that rapprochement of the models is possible on theoretical levels and is taking place in practice in Scotland; that this rapprochement, though significant, will probably not deliver a total reintegration of the models; and that the use of new metaphors can help religious education to be re-understood as a unified process.

Such research must have limits defined by subject, level and place. This research looks at religious education as an area of the school curriculum; related activities, such as parish-based courses of sacramental preparation or adult religious education, are referred to from time to time, but do not form a substantial

part of this discussion. Likewise, religious observance in schools, although sometimes connected with religious education, not be treated extensively, as it brings its own specific challenges. Also, I look at the subject in a Scottish context: English, American and Australian thinking and practice, among others, are referred to with particular interest in the light it can shed on Scottish thinking and provision.

(a) Tests of Convergence

How will it be possible to test the nature and extent of convergence between models? My exploration begins by acknowledging and tracing historically the development of confessional religious education and the emergence of the non-confessional tradition. Chapter 2 analyses this divergence and its present unsatisfactory characteristics. Chapter 3 evaluates the theoretical work of a range of British and other religious educators [86] who have hinted at convergence theory.

Two tests of convergence theory are then applied. First, chapter 4 explores the work of the American confessionalist, Thomas Groome, in dialogue with two theorists in the British non-confessional context, Michael Grimmitt and Alex Rodger. The extent of their compatability is evaluated in order to discover any possibility of convergence at a theoretical level.

Next, chapter 5 gathers evidence from the practice of religious education in Scotland, evaluating levels of mutual co-operation between the two models in order to discover the possibility of convergence at the practical level. The limits of convergence at both theoretical and practical levels are identified, and the need for a new evolution in the rationale is established. Chapter 6 outlines the theory and practice of a new evolution towards a converged model which takes metaphorical root in two sources, namely psychotherapy and liberation theology.

(b) A Method for Evaluating Convergence

To test the possibility of convergence at the theoretical level, a philosophical framework is necessary. This must be defined in advance of the philosophical exploration, so that relevant points may be placed appropriately within it, in a structure which allows corresponding ideas to be juxtaposed for comparison or contrast. Determining this framework is therefore the first task.

The framework is defined by attending to and interpreting the work of curricular theorists who have dealt with questions of philosophical justification of particular subjects or whole curricula. My framework establishes three working categories of philosophical

justification. It is not offered as a fundamental principle of the curricular philosophy of religious education, although elements of it might contribute to such a work. It is constructed merely as a device for assembling and categorising theoretical insights on religious education.

My first category focuses on human nature: frequently, this is closely coupled to my second category, on the nature of human knowledge in relation to religion (87). For Philip Phenix, justification of the curriculum is found in *"the nature of man and of the educative process itself"* and argues that "the controlling idea of general education, imparting unity to the pattern of studies, emerges from *a philosophy of man and his ways of knowing"* (88). J.W.D. Smith claims that religious education "raised basic questions about *the nature of man*, *the nature of religion*, and *the nature of the educational process*" (89). R.S. Peters, writing in the same era, sees education as necessarily a moral process, and therefore seeks justification for any curriculum in the fields of ethics and social philosophy; but he argues that ethical principles in education "cannot be determinately applied without a *concept of man*". He also hints at "the problem of how the logical aspects of... (diverse) forms of thought are related to the *psychology of learning*" (90).

More recently, Fairweather and MacDonald identify our understanding of *modern society*, *the educational process*, and *the nature of religion* as three starting-points for an educational justification of Religious and Moral Education. They assert that "human existence is characterised not only by rationality.... but also by inwardness" (91), and this assertion carries them into the field of human nature. For Michael Grimmitt, the task of establishing an acceptable basis for teaching religion in schools requires us to look at *"the nature of knowledge"* and *"the nature of the child"* (92). For Elmer Theissen, contemporary problems in liberal education arise because of a lack of clarity about its *metaphysics*, its *theory of human nature*, and its *theory of knowledge* (93). For Kleinig, any plausible understanding of education should include *"some conception or vision of personhood"* (94). One phenomenologist of religion defined religion in terms of its *"subject"* (the person who practises) and its *"object"* (the active agent or power, God) (95).

The quotations above (with my emphasis) highlight some recurring points relating to *the nature of humanity/man/the child* and *the nature of knowing*. To these two, I add Fairweather and MacDonald's third point, *the nature of religion*, together with Theissen's first point, *metaphysics*. Gathering and integrating

their insights, I believe I am able to build a framework with three categories of humanity, knowledge and religion.

To explore the nature of humanity, I intend to use the term Anthropology, in philosophical context, to mean an understanding of the nature of being human (96). Anthropology is a term used by Rahner in a theological context to define humanity philosophically (97). Who or what is this young human being, this learner, that she needs to learn religion? What is it about being human that makes the religious quest for meaning, value and purpose important? These questions apply to the individual human being but also to human society and culture; to the learner and also to the teacher.

To the second category, that of the nature of knowledge, I apply the name Epistemology. Here there is an exploration of the possibility, nature and mechanisms of religious knowledge. What it means to think and to know religiously is a core issue. How, and using which faculties, does the learner in religion learn? How does the learner apprehend religion? These questions inevitably mingle with anthropological ones and also leads us on to the third category, the nature of religion (98).

Religion forms the third of my categories. When applied to an educational perspective, this category has different emphases. Two such, theology and religious studies, are mentioned here. Theology sometimes has an explicitly confessional character as a discipline pursued from within a faith community; for this reason, it cannot contribute as much to the theoretical framework in a secular, plural society as it could in previous times. Religious Studies, an approach with different methods and assumptions, exists both within and beside Theology, but is usually assumed to be conducted independently of faith assumptions. Their relation to each other is problematic; although they coincide, the former term often carries a confessional character, while the latter often suggests a neutral or phenomenological approach. In fact, in these two terms we perceive something of the distinction between the two models of religious education. This distinction is important and is recognised. But we are dealing here with a methodological category, designed simply to take in the *content* of religious education processes, be they confessional or non-confessional. At this point, therefore, it is enough to say that Theology and Religious Studies together provide definitions and explanations of the objects or foci of religious study.

In doing so, they have a significant contemporary contribution to the generating of the theory. In this working category, they can be referred to as Religion.

The three categories may be illustrated by grammatical analysis of virtually any sentence stating an aim in religious and moral education. Let us take, as a simple example, a learning outcome from the recent national curricular guidelines:

> "the pupil will have some knowledge of Christian festivals" (99).

Analysis of the sentence in grammatical terms gives us "the pupil" (subject noun), "have some knowledge" (verb), "Christian festivals" (object, adjective and noun).

The *subject nouns* of religious education require philosophical definition: who or what is the human pupil? What I choose to call Anthropology, a philosophical approach to defining humanity, provides the category in which the humanity of the learner and of the teacher may be explored.

The *verbs* of religious education require philosophical definition: what is knowledge and learning in a religious context? What does it mean to "have some knowledge of" religious content ? What I choose to call Epistemology provides the category in

which several views about the possibility, nature and mechanisms of knowing in religion may be weighed.

The *object nouns* and *adjectives* of religious education, in other words its content focus, will vary according to the context. In the sentence quoted, the object or focus of study is Christian festivals. In other cases, it might be an artefact, a text, a belief, a practice, or any one of a huge array of phenomena. The *object noun* and *adjective* require philosophical definition: what is the nature of the religious phenomenon studied? In what way is it expected to impact upon the learner? The category which I choose to call Religion provides the an account of the religious phenomena. This grammatical analysis of one typical aim confirms the appropriateness of a framework of three working philosophical categories to underpin religious education.

These categories are used, where appropriate, in my exploration of the divergence of models (100) and in my evaluation of theoretical convergence (101). My treatment of practical convergence (102) tends to analyse specific documents and statistics, and therefore makes less use of the categories. However, I return to them in my construction of a new converged model (103).

Digest of Chapter 2

DIVERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MODELS

Chapter 2

DIVERGENCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MODELS

This chapter analyses the historical development of the two "models" of religious education, the confessional and non-confessional, paying special attention to their underlying views of human nature (anthropologies), their explanations of religion, and their approaches to knowledge (epistemologies). The attitudes and concerns of religious minority communities are also discussed. On this analysis, there can be built an evaluation of the divergence of models. My evaluation is that divergence was a historical reality, producing the phenomenological and experiential approaches to non-confessional religious education; that Scotland evolved a distinctive form of non-confessionalism offering unique possibilities for convergence; and that a prolongation of diverged models fails to satisfy their practitioners.

1. The Confessional Tradition

In the same way that a living religion is born, flourishes, illuminates truth, and carries within it not only diversity of views but also the seeds of its own division, so the confessional Christian approach to

nurture has been diverse and capable of cellular division through most of its history. Hence it is referred to here as a "tradition", emphasising its living capacity for inspiration, for the attraction of loyalty and service, for the expression of religious insight, and also for internal change, diversity and division. I approach the analysis of the tradition with this understanding.

Histories of religious education have tended to focus on specific periods of creativity, or to trace particular themes. Butler's work [1] takes a liberal protestant perspective and is perhaps not so much a history as a historical development of a liberal protestant theology of religious education, looking at the early Christian and patristic periods before turning his attention to American endeavours. Ulich [2] discusses selected periods of the greatest endeavour in doctrinal development, ecclesiastical reform or catechetical instruction [3]. Westerhoff [4] focuses on the issue of conflict and its resolution. Sawicki [5] contributes a portrait of a teaching church, arguing that the full vision of confessional teaching was at its best a balance of constituent factors.

The approach taken here is also selective and focused, pinpointing the contributions made by

particular periods and then analysing how those periods gave accretions to the church's developing educational vision, in terms of the three analytical categories.

(a) The *Kerygma* and the Emergence of Diversity in the Content of Religious Teaching

The first task of the early Christian communities [6] was to define themselves in terms of their message. In terms of our three categories, therefore, their chief preoccupation was with religion: the content and status of their religious message, the way in which they lived it out, and the boundaries between that message and the Jewish and pagan worlds. Much of the narrative and admonition of that period is explainable as a clarifying of the *Kerygma* and concomitant doctrinal definitions were the first tasks of the Christian tradition [7].

This first task of the community took place in a hostile and uncomprehending climate in which conflict spurred them on to clarity [8]. Diversity sprang up immediately, sometimes in rituals of initiation [9], sometimes in incomplete teaching [10], at times characterised by in-fighting and self-contradiction [11], and at times influenced by other religious groups and philosophies [12]. The key figure in this kerygmatic struggle was Saul of Tarsus, whose

determined and articulate nature was a suitable tool for mission and for straightening out doctrinal deviation when he encountered it [13]. Saul had a gift for communication across cultural and religious boundaries: both by Luke's account [14] and his own [15] he made effective use of a technique which respected and worked through the life-experience and philosophy of his Gentile hearers, thus piloting an approach to religious learning which would later be developed into epistemological insights by Augustine and others.

The early church's campaign to define and preserve orthodoxy was conducted with an ambiguous attitude to the surrounding religious and philosophical culture, which was at times emulated and incorporated into the *Kerygma* and at at other times condemned [16]. In time, Christian educators generally tended to acceptance and even ownership of pagan social and theological items considered useful. As Ulich deftly puts it:

> "the longer the return of the saviour kept them waiting, the greater became the temptation to compromise with the social environment" [17].

This pattern is seen in the Johannine use of the Greek *Logos* [18] and later in the openness of Tertullian and others to pre-Christian learning [19].

Dispute over doctrine and practice continued as a characteristic of the reformation period. Again, conflict spurred clarification, producing a "golden age of the catechism" (20). The nineteenth century's attacks on supernatural religious belief inevitably saw Christianity questioned, but still included in a dominant position in progressive curricula (21). The Roman Catholic institutions dealt with critical attacks by sponsoring a return to scholarly study (22).

(b) The Emergence of Diverse Anthropological Positions

In the confessional tradition, views about the learner and the learning process varied widely along a spectrum between what I call high and low anthropologies. High anthropologies are those which emphasise the importance and dignity of the learner, make space for his or her active participation, and use theological sources which speak of the high destiny of humanity through creation and salvation. Low anthropologies are those which emphasise the ignorance, moral weakness and need of the learner to be saved. They tend to lead to teacher-dominated education, and to stress theological themes of sin, morality and pure doctrine. High and low anthropologies may be said to be similar to open and closed theological positions respectively.

In some cases, the assumption was that the learner knew nothing and needed to be shielded from the corruption of the pagan environment [23]; in other cases, the learner's own experiences and interests were held as valuable in themselves [24]. It is, however, possible to exaggerate these differences, or to project on to them a conflict between traditionalists and modernists which did not exist at that time [25].

The place of the learner evolved in Protestant thinking from an early emphasis on the value of external realities such as doctrine and scripture [26], to the later emphasis on the subjective affirmation of Christian truth [27], thus shifting the focus of catechesis away from content and towards the learner. This shift has been identified as influential upon the optimism of several eighteenth and nineteenth century philosophers of education [28].

An awareness of the learner at the centre of the process is harder to detect in counter-reformation movements. The 1566 Trent or Roman Catechism was commissioned for use with children and uneducated adults, with apparently no recognition of their distinct needs [29]; but some catechetical leaders were noted for their concern with the the student's progress and their gifts in communication [30].

Anthropology of the learner reached new optimistic heights in Rousseau [31] and to a lesser extent in his intellectual successors such as Pestalozzi [32]. The tradition stemming from Rousseau became known as the psychological movement, and has in turn influenced twentieth century Christian education through the major work of Jungmann and Groome, both of whom make use of psychological insights and hold a high anthropology [33].

(c) The Emergence of Epistemological Issues in the Catechetical Process

As with their views of the learner, so with their learning and teaching techniques, the practitioners of the confessional tradition have varied along a spectrum between content-centred, teacher dominated approaches and learner-centred ones [34].

On the one hand, catechesis involved the communication of knowledge. Typically in the patristic period, this would take the form of lectures involving repetition and memorisation, together with a strong sense of moral commitment as a form of knowledge, seen repeatedly in the work of Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom [35]. On the other hand, catechesis produced a strong sense of knowledge with the heart, taught through loving regard for the learner and through

dialogue. These are typical aspects of Augustine's practical approach (36).

Medieval scholasticism, expressed through the emergence of universities and the writing of *Summae*, represented a new meeting of content and method (37). As an educational procedure, scholasticism behaved in an epistemologically revolutionary way. In the first place, it envisioned three-way dialogue between teacher, learner and text. Second, through its use of Aristotle, it opened up the range of texts which were permissible for study. Third, it took education out of the monastic milieu and into universities, where dialectical argument could be opened up and more freely practised. The church's support for this openness was mixed (38).

The importance of liturgical celebration as a means of teaching and as a form of knowledge is a recurrent theme in the confessional tradition (39). There was a belief that doctrine should be celebrated as well as spoken, and that celebration of sacraments of initiation were in themselves educational activity. Scholasticism is criticised for its poverty in this respect; the late medieval flowering of new aesthetic and spiritual movements is attributable to the period's failure to give liturgical and emotional heart to its intellect (40).

The romantic educationalists who stood in Rousseau's tradition coupled an optimistic anthropology with a progressive epistemology. Pestalozzi, for instance, opposed the rote learning method and its lack of meaning for children (41). The Roman Catholic church responded to the progressive ideas of Pestalozzi, Rousseau and especially Herbart through the work of the Munich and Vienna catechetical movements of the early twentieth century (42). These movements had a solid practical base in the work of the Munich Catechetical Society (43). An embryonic form of differentiation was practised, and approved of, in this context, perhaps inherited from the Rousseau tradition (44). From this it would seem that an emergent secular tradition in education had stimulated the church toward a change in methods.

Jungmann's work was of critical importance epistemologically and theologically. An Austrian Jesuit and leading light of the Munich conferences, his theology of the message focused closely on the role of the learner in appropriating doctrine, prefiguring much of child-centred learning and reminding us again of the open and progressive features of the confessional tradition (45). The Munich movement's concerns have been re-expressed by later twentieth century Catholic

educators [46]. Protestant catechetical effort has also found itself responding in different ways to the insights of nineteenth century thought [47].

It is improbable that these epistemological insights reached the ground level of confessional schooling in Scotland with much, if any force. Pedagogical expertise was slow to develop [48]; methods used in religious lessons were poor and did not reflect the insights of the Munich movement and others [49].

Epistemologically, the confessional tradition has struggled with the tension between communication of doctrine and aesthetic, emotional and personal learning. While the latter has grown in importance since the nineteenth century, the struggle has always existed.

(d) Vatican II and the Modern Period

Renewal, the central theme of the second Vatican council of 1962-65, affected education only partially. Several related areas of the church underwent substantial overhaul: liturgy was transformed; the Church was re-envisioned, with Biblical imagery, as the people of God; the educational mission of the church was given a high priority [50]; but it is suggested here that subsequent modifications in the confessional tradition have been limited and have not lived up to

the most open and inspired characteristics of the confessional tradition as a whole, especially in the category of epistemology.

Anthropologically, the council's thinking was interpreted in terms which accepted human development as part of a scheme of natural theology. Education was accepted as a pursuit in its own right, and as a path for the human person to reach their divine destiny. One participant spoke of the Council's

> "insistence upon the integration of Christian education into the whole pattern of human life in all its aspects... Christian education is in the world and in a sense for the world, since man must always work out his salvation in the concrete situation... We note the strong emphasis on the intellectual values of all education and an appeal for all to strive to achieve the highest development of the human mind... this must be done in the framework of the moral formation of man and in the fullness of his supernatural destiny" (51).

The Council's treatment of other religions takes a significant step forward. In a declaration whose language now appears dated and patronising, the council emphasised the church's rejection of any form of discrimination on grounds of religion, and showed openness to the truths and richness of insight in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam (52). The declaration stops short of any call for world religions to appear in the syllabus of Roman Catholic schools or parishes, or other catechetical programmes.

It is in epistemological terms that the council's work and subsequent documents prove the most mixed and least progressive, failing to embrace some of the older insights of confessionalism. There was some recognition of the needs of learners at different stages (53), reminiscent of Augustine's medicine analogy (54). There was some cautious movement into more openness on content and methods (55). Perhaps most significantly, there was a strong emphasis on helping adult learners to name and understand their own experience in the light of revelation, bearing the hallmark of learner-centred and Freirean methods (56). But even some of the openness of previous educators such as Clement, Augustine and Jungmann seems to have been qualified or simply forgotten (57). The documents cited leave the reader in no doubt that, if a choice has to be made between models of education or evangelisation, the official thinking of the contemporary Roman Catholic church chooses the latter without hesitation. (58).

In England, a subtle epistemological shift took place in the work of the bishops' National Project on Living and Sharing the Faith, launched in 1985. This initiative has no equivalent in the Scottish Roman Catholic church, but some of its aims, ideas and materials have been emulated north of the border (59).

The National Project is rooted in a thoroughly orthodox sense of education as a shared mission of the whole church [60] but departs from Papal thinking in its distinction between catechesis and religious education. Catechesis is

> "addressed to those who have expressed some commitment to the Catholic tradition" [61]

whereas religious education

> "addresses all pupils in our classrooms whether they are from committed Catholic homes or not, whether they themselves practise or not, whether they are from other Christian denominations or other faith traditions" [62].

While schools can provide contexts for catechesis, religious education is something different, catering for the needs of all pupils. The National Project was the first confessional structure to adapt papal thinking at this time [63]. The recognition of denominational schools as religiously plural communities and the acceptance that other religious traditions might be allowed a place in the religious syllabus, are additional and highly contested features [64].

Scotland's catechetical thinking has not followed this route fully, but has gone some way, at first unofficially, and later officially. Rhymer's empirical work with pupils raised doubts about the effectiveness

of confessionalism in producing more positive attitudes towards religion among Roman Catholic pupils [65]; Roman Catholic parents followed a parallel path, revealing some scepticism about the benefits of separate schools [66]. These influences were felt in the official publications of the Catholic Education Commission (Scotland) in the 1990s, which leaned considerably towards non-confessionalism while retaining a strong anchor in the Vatican's missionary rationale [67].

(e) Conclusion

This historical analysis reveals confessionalism as an evolving and complex tradition with its own divisions.

First, corresponding to the category of anthropology, the role of the learner has sometimes been recognised, but there have been both high and low anthropologies. The differences between Chrysostom and Augustine, and the work of Protestant and Catholic reformers, and the influences of the enlightenment all illustrate this continuing debate, which seems as old as catechetics itself. Only comparatively recently has the church attended to the systematic study of the child as learner; through the ongoing work of Fowler and others [68] on stages of faith development, the

church is continuing to take account of this.

Second, corresponding to my category of religion, this form of education has traditionally seen itself as Christian education - that is, education in and for Christianity. With notable exceptions, the confessional tradition has shown no interest in the study of other religious traditions.

Third, corresponding to the category of epistemology, catechetics has been characterised by ongoing internal debate. Put in contemporary terms, the main issue has been the relative merits of formal, cognitive, informational knowledge and informal, affective, personal knowledge; but this is not only a contemporary problem, as the patristic, medieval and romantic periods show. Contemporary comment and practice often focuses on the over-emphasis given to cognitive content in traditional religious education, and calls for a more experiential approach (69). Some argue that catechesis has been consistent in its blend of three elements which deliver a balanced epistemology: content-based instruction; attention to personal morality, witness and service; and liturgy (70). While there have been departures from this blend model, there is a pattern which supports the balanced epistemology described above.

The tradition continues to evolve in ways which correspond to the three analytical categories. Much of the contemporary uncertainty and debate about catechesis continues to exist on the spectrum of high and low anthropologies and their epistemological implications (71). I have argued that, like any living tradition, this one evolves and experiences internal cellular division. I have hinted at ways in which this evolutionary and dividing process produced some features of the non-confessional religious education.

2. The Emergence of the Non-Confessional Tradition

As new religions are born from older ones and may become their rivals - Christianity from Judaism, Sikhism from Hinduism and Islam - so non-confessional religious education is born of its older Catholic and Christian counterpart, and has gradually drawn away from it, until the visions and practices became divergent and were seen in terms of two distinct, sometimes rival models of religious education.

The divergence may be traced back more than a century (72) but it is possible to identify earlier roots. The method used here is to trace the anthropological, religious and epistemological roots of non-confessionalism, before discussing the breakdown of

traditional confessional education in the post-war period. The emergence of phenomenological and experiential movements are then analysed. Finally, I argue that Scotland's particular form of non-confessionalism was more controlled and more intellectually coherent, and has contributed to the Scottish system's unique contemporary capacity for convergence.

(a) Theoretical Origins

Arguably what distinguishes non-confessionalism from its older counterpart is the determination to account for education and all other aspects of culture in human terms. While confessionalism sometimes placed the human learner centre-stage with a positive identity, non-confessionalism regularly did so as an article of faith. Humanism, therefore, is a bedrock of this tradition.

If historical starting-points are important, the renaissance is a strong candidate. Some of the roots of non-confessional anthropology lie in this flowering of human self-confidence in art, writing, rediscovery of classical texts, exploration, medicine and jurisprudence. While these disciplines were mostly contained within the framework of Christendom, they nevertheless produced a marked change to the settled

convictions and intellectual habits of the church, and prefigured the further development of humanism (73).

If the renaissance served as the first wave of independent human-centred disciplines, a second wave is provided by the Protestant and Catholic reformers whose interest in education for human reasons drove a wedge between sacred and what we now call secular pursuits. Luther's concern for education led him to see the reformation as a scholarly movement and to emphasise the importance of languages both for theological and social reasons (74). Calvin's humanist background is at work when he affirms:

> "Although we accord the first place to the word of God, we do not reject good training" (75).

Knox's intention that

> "everie severall Churche have a Scholmaister" (76)

was an embryonic policy for universal education. In all three reformers, the motivation was a subtle mixture in which enthusiasm for human learning for its own sake was leavened with insights about its advantages for the spread of their gospel. The educational effort of the Jesuits is now interpreted as a philosophy of education based on the needs of the learner and the world (77).

A third and more decisive cause of divergence comes in the form of the Enlightenment. This movement of thought was arguably the period in European history when a divided and demoralised Christendom first had to confront the challenges of empirical research, new social orders, new aspirations for freedom and national identity [78] and new understandings of humanity and the physical environment. If there is one moment at which new disciplines began to hatch and escape from Theology, this was it. The Kantian insistence on autonomy of will, and the vision of the individual exercising self-determination in matters moral or credal, was characteristic of this period and remains part of its bequest to us [79].

Humanity now understood itself in terms not of revelation and destiny but of human values such as reason and liberty. External religious authorities were suspect [80]; most forms of enquiry referred to procedures and sources wholly beyond the control of the Christian tradition, or to re-cast Christian insights in new ways, demonstrating an independence of thought pre-figured but never reached by the renaissance. Thus began Christendom's

> "... melacholy long withdrawing roar,
> Retreating to the breath
> Of the night wind" [81]

which some now call secularisation.

There is, here, no absolute claim that the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment are the prime sources for non-confessional religious education; rather that, as we search for the roots of the divergence, we cannot help noting the emergence of scholarly disciplines centred on human experience and gradually becoming free from dogmatic control. This emergence is central to the rationalism of non-confessional anthropology.

If religious realities had been at the heart of the confessional project, for non-confessionalism they must be located as one human reality among others. There could be no automatic or imposed vision of religion. Natural theology, with its journey from general to special revelations, had been spurned by the reformers and suspected by the rationalists, and lost credibility as a system of thought. Theology, finding the route from physics to metaphysics too prone to ambush, had to find another way.

Philosophy, no longer harnessed to the defence of one truth against another, could turn its attention to religion and claim to deal with it objectively. Religion was placed into categories: of feeling (82), of experience (83), of some social or political

function [84], or of special phenomena [85], among others. The usefulness of the word itself was questioned [86]. This independent approach to religion represented, for institutional Christianity, a reduction in importance with which it could not be content. In the twentieth century, the confrontation between revived orthodoxies in the shape of neo-Thomism and neo-orthodoxy [87] and a revived rationalism in the shape of logical positivism served to emphasise the divergence further.

Underlying these conflicts has been the debate over religion as divinely revealed or as an expression of some human characteristics. The central problem for the emergent non-confessional study of religion was where to place the object of its study. Its status has usually been object rather than all-embracing reality, and human reality or need rather than special or divine message. The understanding of religion remains the most contested of the three categories.

Only gradually did non-confessionalism develop its own epistemological insights: there were no immediate revolutions in educational method. This was partly for political reasons: nineteenth-century governments, whether conservatively ecclesiastical or liberal-secular, used their emergent public school system as a medium for control in order to defend their politico-

religious position in Europe [88]: this tended to inhibit experimentation in methods.

Movement away from transmissive methods and towards developmental insights began with Protestant educators, most notably Schleiermacher [89]. His insights were, with exceptions, shared by the secular tradition from Rousseau to Pestalozzi. There was a general suspicion of the older, ecclesial aims of religious education [90], and a desire to make it educationally defensible and understandable to the child. Much of this concern prefigured Goldman: his restatement of the concern was presumably necessary because it had not impacted sufficiently on English non-confessional practice.

The roots of the tradition lie, therefore, in a highly-developed sense of the human at the centre of education and culture, a confused plurality of mainly human interpretations of religion, and a slow development of pedagogical awareness.

(b) The Collapse of the Traditional Approach in England and Scotland

Religious education in this period is usually criticised for its traditionalism and its resemblance to confessionalism. Although the intellectual roots of divergence were there, little practical divergence had

occured. The characteristics of this period included heavy reliance on the Bible [91], teaching methods which were more conservative and rote-based than the rest of the curriculum [92], and assumptions about the Christian nature of the project [93]. These characteristics led to the gradual weakening of the subject, increasing progressively [94].

This was attributable partly to the subject's educational inadequacies and partly to the prevailing liberal concern of the 1960s. Education, it was argued, must meet goals of rationality and of worthwhileness for the individual; religious education as then practised was heavily criticised for its potential to indoctrinate [95]. Religious educators were powerfully motivated to remove their subject from the obloquy of perceived indoctrination [96]. This motivation became more widespread after the publication of research findings questioning the effectiveness of the traditional approach [97]. It is now widely assumed that Goldman's research in particular acted as a catalyst for change [98].

Evolution from a traditional form took place in England with apparently little positive theoretical underpinning [99]. Practical resources of the period adopted some modern methods and some coverage of world

religions but did not escape a confessional identity (100). Thus the closing period of traditionalism is sometimes known as neo-traditional, or neo-confessional, and has been criticised from multi-faith and multi-ethnic perspectives (101).

Despite the initial failure of neo-traditionalism to follow through on the implications of Goldman's findings, it was not long before the subject began to be opened up to the study of other religions and to a new approach. Comparative Religion and Phenomenology became important and popular approaches.

(c) The Application and Failure of Phenomenology

The origins of phenomenology are not coterminous with those of the whole non-confessional tradition. I have argued that the latter owes something to movements of thought from the fifteenth century onward; the former, by contrast, is usually traced to the nineteenth century (102). Some aspects of phenomenology, such as eidetic reduction (103), might be interpreted as forms of spirituality in the individual's approach to religion, corresponding to my category of religion; but it is in the methodological or epistemological sense that phenomenology has had its strongest impact on the non-confessional tradition.

Here the emphasis was on scientific objectivity. Van der Leeuw's defining note on the method of *epoche* or bracketing out the learner's experience and assumptions became a hallmark of phenomenology in the twentieth century:

> "The term *epoche* is a technical expression employed in current phenomenology by Husserl and other philosophers. It implies that no judgement is expressed concerning the objective world, which is thus placed "between brackets" as it were. All phenomena, therefore, are considered solely as they are presented to the mind....; in this way the observer restricts himself to pure description systematically pursued, himself adopting the attitude of complete intellectual suspense, or of abstention from all judgement, regarding these controversial topics" (104).

A similarly scientific note is sounded in Lord Gifford's wishes for the lectures which bear his name:

> "I wish the lecturers to treat their subject as a strictly natural science..., without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation. I wish it considered as astronomy or chemistry is" (105).

The British adoption of such a procedure was marked by a gloss of Smart's devising. The student was to be concerned not only with how a faith manifests itself or appears to the senses (its phenomena), but also with "how it actually is" (106). The external phenomena of religion could only be understood through the inner life of the believer (107). The student, therefore, was faced with the challenge of penetrating

the heart and mind of the practitioner. This was seen as a scientific undertaking, starting from an objective standpoint (108). Smart's desire to arrive at the inner reality of religion is traceable to van der Leeuw and others; but his emphasis on penetrating the heart and mind is new.

Smart's adapted and popularised phenomenology served as an escape from the curricular opprobrium of confessionalism; for this it was well qualified, with a scientific approach appealing to modernism, and an intellectual pedigree accepted by higher education (109). It was widely implemented with some controversial and extreme results (110). With hindsight we can see that the escape, including the more extreme applications, was necessary and salutary. It was a pattern repeated in other national systems (111). Later generations adapted Smart, usually by softening the objectivity and emphasising the empathy (112).

Difficulties with the phenomenological approach are now widely discussed, but most of them were also understood by the earliest exponents. Here I divide the difficulties into two groups: questions about the possibility of the approach, and questions about its desirability.

The question of possibility is reduced to the

questions of what the objective facts about a religion really are [113] and how we might select them [114]. If these two are overcome, the possibility of *epoche* is still widely doubted by contemporaries [115]. It ought to be acknowledged that early exponents had denied the possibility, and desirability, of complete *epoche* [116]; why, then, was this made such an issue by critics? The most likely answer is that popularised phenomenology, as practised in schools, forgot the epistemological limitations identified by the founders, and claimed a form of scientific objectivity which they disavowed.

Questions about desirability focus on the alleged negative features of a neutral or scientific approach. Arthur brilliantly pictures neutrality as a "death's head" whose "baleful medusa gaze, shorn of all expression of personal commitment, turns to stone each living faith it touches" [117]. The critiques are usually epistemological: Grimmitt, echoing Dewey, warns of inert knowledge becoming "so much verbal lumber", preventing pupils from moving beyond the descriptive to the evaluative level [118]. Imaginative attributes are ignored; this "experiential apartheid" prevents genuine understanding [119]; perhaps surprisingly, Hirst concludes that merely learning about religion is limited and should include imaginative and expressive

activities, even engagement in religious activities, where these do not presuppose commitment [120]; and neutrality is subject to political suspicion from the left [121]. In the category of religion, the approach has been seen as reductionist and an implied attack on religious commitment [122].

These criticisms were aimed mostly at the implementation of the approach in schools, or else were misunderstandings of Smart and the older phenomenological tradition. Although critical of both the possibility and the desirability [123], Arthur acknowledges van der Leeuw's strictures [124]. Smart went some way to showing how an approach based on his dimensions could be scientific and still safeguard some feeling of encountering a religion existentially:

> "What we need to do ultimately in the study of religion is to break down that simplified opposition between learning about religion and feeling the living power of religion. The two can go together and indeed must go together..." [125]

Already a complex and plural tradition, phenomenology fractured under these criticisms. Support for a popularised, Smart-based approach in schools dwindled [126]; Dunne's fascinating study attempted a reconciliation with Christian theology through the concept of "passing over" [127]; elsewhere the tradition continued with isolated calls for the

continuation of a pure form of religious anthropology (128).

(d) The Experiment with the Experiential Approach

Movement away from phenomenology towards the experiential approach began gradually in the 1980s. The latter grew intellectually out of phenomenology, as non-confessionalism had from confessionalism. Grimmitt, whose thinking is hard to categorise, embraces elements of both approaches in the 1970s and 1980's (129). Those who wished to correct the imbalance of the phenomenological 1970s experimented with affective and reflective techniques in order to "see the world through the eyes of a religious believer" (130). The approach was reactive to phenomenology, but also complementary and compensatory.

The experiential tradition shares some antecedents with phenomenology, but these sources tend to emphasise different aspects of religious reality. Thus William James' theme was of religion not as external phenomena but as personal and inward:

> "Do what we can with our defining, the truth must at last be confronted that we are dealing with a field of experience..." (131);

and thus the epistemology must escape from illusions of objectivity:

> "... the pretension, under such circumstances, to be rigorously 'scientific' or 'exact' in our terms would only stamp us as lacking in understanding of our task" (132),

into a method of enquiry reflecting the personal nature of the subject:

> "If the inquiry be psychological, not religious institutions, but rather religious feelings and religious impulses must be its subject, and I must confine myself to those more developed subjective phenomena recorded in literature...., in works of piety and autobiography..... The *documents humains* which we shall find most instructive need not then be sought for in the haunts of special erudition - they lie along the beaten highway..." (133);

Nevertheless, James' was a scientific study and could be said to belong to the phenomenological tradition. The same could be said of another experiential antecedent, Rudolf Otto (134).

In the dissatisfaction with the school-based adaptation of phenomenology lay the desire to retrieve a personal epistemology. There developed the view that R.E. must do something more radical than simply teach the world religions. It must "go beneath the systems - Christianity, Islam, Judaism... - to the age-long insecurity of man" (135). Account was taken of the implications of religious experience research (136), particularly as applied to children. In terms of Smart's dimensions, the experiential was privileged, suggesting an epistemology which placed wisdom or inner

experience in prime position (137). One may infer that anthropological and epistemological imbalances were being corrected in this approach.

Opportunities for convergence became visible through this approach. Educators from the confessional tradition joined the discussion and introduced spirituality as a way to match the experiential experiment (138). The world of psychotherapy contributed a critique of cognitive teaching and a call for educators to facilitate change and learning (139). I develop these possible connections in chapter 6.

In the 1990s the experiential theme was suggested in some major non-confessional schemes (140) and became explicit through several specialist books (141).

Non-confessional thinking is influenced by both phenomenological and experiential streams. In England this produces confusion: we see the publication of syllabuses emphasising a unity of "learning about religions" with "learning from religion" (142); yet in the same documents this unity is blighted by a dominant emphasis on content in six world religions (143). Further, one Christian educator criticises "learning from" as a weak concept (144). The cognitive dominance is criticised in an alternative syllabus which focuses on life themes and the character of the universal human

quest [145]. Either these twin children of non-confessionalism have yet to resolve their struggle, or the "learning from" element has failed to modify phenomenology and has become influenced by it.

(e) Scotland in the Present Period: From Neo-Traditionalism to Meaning, Value and Purpose

Since 1972 [146] the Scottish provision has evolved from neo-traditionalism to an educationally accepted philosophy with distinctive potential for convergence. This considerable change was achieved without a phenomenological period of the sort which England had during the 1970s and early 1980s [147]. Scotland's relative avoidance of phenomenology is suggested here as one of the roots of its present capacity for convergence.

From the appointment of Millar's committee in 1968, the term "religious instruction" began to be replaced by "religious education" [148]. The new name was, therefore, being mooted two years earlier than the same suggestion in England [149]; it is possible that this slightly earlier start may have helped to develop the subject in Scotland without resort to Smart-based phenomenology.

Structural and philosophical divergence from confessionalism was initiated by Millar, by the

subsequent developments which he recommended (150), and by the 1969 publication of Smith's crucial, forceful argument for a new kind of religious education freed from expectations of fostering Christian belief (151).

The SCCORE documents tend to understand religions in thoroughly non-confessional terms as "the classic expressions" of the human search, and providing "for many people" a context for understanding (152). Here the non-confessional themes are strong: the stress on the human search, the avoidance of absolute claims for any tradition or for religion in general; but there is an avoidance of absolute phenomenological or experiential reductions of religion. Anthropologically the documents say little beyond assuming growth, development and deeper awareness of identity as fruits of the child's study (153).

Epistemologically, the tendency is less towards phenomenology than to a child-centred approach seeking to undertand human experience in relation to the search for "meaning, value and purpose in life" (154). SCCORE's influence may be measured by the extent to which these and other phrases have entered the lore of the subject.

If a relative avoidance of phenomenology is one distinctive feature, another related feature is the

alliance between religious and moral education. This theme was perhaps inherited from confessionalism, entered the title of Millar's report [155], was continued as a combination of modes in curricular initiatives for S3-4 [156], and became more or less a single mode in P1-7 [157].

This alliance of modes has not been universally accepted. Neither the inspectorate nor the names of examination courses reflect it [158]. Wider thinking has striven to separate the modes. That children in the past were taught religion in order to make them morally good, is now perceived as unethical and unrealistic [159]; moreover, it is now prone to attack on the grounds that moral attributes are not absolutely dependent on religious practice.

Yet the alliance has philosophical supporters. Phenix's study of fields of meaning reveals at least three which are deliverable by religious and moral education [160]; the integration of the realms was of importance to him [161]. Closer to home, Rodger's involvement in the Values Education Project [162] led to his call for a re-integration of activities at the personal end of the curriculum, namely the personal, social, moral and religious. Their re-integration should be led by religious education and directed

toward coherence (163).

In practice, the alliance served to strengthen the subject on the timetable. The moral element was instrumental in preventing an excessively academic study of the subject from taking root in Scotland. While children were required to participate in a process of moral reflection and growth, a reasonably constant element of the personal was guaranteed during a time when England's experiment with phenomenology, sponsored by the Schools Council, was interpreted as ruling this out.

The implicit epistemological balance of the SCCORE documents and the alliance of modes has enriched religious education. Study of religions and personal, moral reflection support each other; in theory, neither has the upper hand. This balance has continued into curricular developments of the 1980s (164).

Scotland's story of divergence and the development of non-confessional has unique features. While the need to establish a non-confessional vision was as pressing, and its intellectual impact as powerful as in England, the divergence occured with less experimentation and confusion than in England. English developments and publications have been influential to some extent (165); but this has not upset the balanced rationale of

Scottish provision. The non-confessional model settled upon has, in common with its confessional forbear, a long-standing and widely understood commitment to moral education and an openness to the reflective forms of knowledge (166); these factors make Scotland a promising laboratory for a theory of convergence.

3. Religious Minorities in Scotland

Scotland's religiously plural society contains faith communities with divergent feelings about the religious education needs of their children; roughly these express themselves in support for both non-confessional and confessional models. Despite the difficulties and risks inherent in grouping several ancient and respected faith traditions together, I must attempt some consideration of their present ethnic and religious situation in Scotland, of their educational and nurturing traditions, and of how these two factors meet to influence their educational expectations and attitudes.

(a) Context: The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: The Minorities' Hermeneutics of Suspicion

There is a sense in which Jewish, Muslim and other faith communities are acting out the attempt to sing their own educational song in a strange land. The tensions brought about by living in Britain are

economic, political and cultural: patterns of minority adaptation, or absorption, run alongside, and occasionally clash with, patterns of isolation and resistance to the majority culture [167]. Education, with its role in cultural and moral transmission, must inevitably be the prime battleground on which these patterns meet [168].

Jewish educators have differences about the role of education in an open and plural society, about the need for separate schools, about Jewish identity in a mixed culture [169], about the purpose of education [170], and about women and their educational position [171]. Islamic education, while in the main suspicious of western education, helped to shape it and shares some of its critical values [172].

With its premium on personal autonomy, critical skills and open-ended processes, western education seems suspect to some minority faiths. This could be because of a suspected hidden Christian agenda [173] or because critical openness and associated western values seem inimical to, say, Muslim belief [174]. To some communities, however, these problems seem to matter little: Buddhism, perhaps because its transmission is a function of the *Sangha*, seems to make little issue of its place in a plural society [175].

But for many in this "strange land", traditional religious education in its literal sense - the handing-on of the faith and its inseparable culture - must occupy a central role. For Jews it is connected with a sense of cultural, spiritual and ethnic survival as much as with divine laws (176); for Muslims it is a duty to God, training children's memories for correct worship and their wills for moral obedience (177); in the end, society survives only by this path (178). For both faiths, the memorisation of sacred texts is central (179) and contrasts with pupil-centred methods. For Hinduism, traditional forms of nurture through praxis and ritual in the home cannot be so effective in a plural society (180); understanding the faith involves breaking with western thought (181). Many faiths share Christianity's reliance on ritual for teaching affective and moral insights (182); moral and religious education belong together. This ought to make the Scottish system, with its alliance of the modes, an easier home for minority faiths, but there is no clear evidence for or against this.

b) Attitudes to Non-Confessionalism

Minority communities' traditional religious education has some natural resemblance to Christian confessionalism, but can become caught up between

conflicting patterns of adaptation and resistance to the majority culture. These pressures send communities in diverse directions, sometimes towards a confessional Christian context, at other times to an autonomous confessional stance, and often to a strong support for multi-faith religious education in a non-confessional framework.

Minority faiths may resist non-confessional religious education for a variety of reasons, usually associated with the pressures discussed above. Resistance takes a number of forms.

Parental attraction to Christian confessionalism as a choice for their child's schooling is a growing pattern in Scotland and England, usually associated with perceived standards of moral teaching and behaviour (183). Where parents opt into non-denominational schools, concern is expressed over the accuracy and respect with which their faith may be taught in the multi-faith syllabus (184). For Muslims, other issues in the school may include food, uniform, mixed physical education, assembly, fasting, holy days and times of prayer (185). Dissatisfaction on these issues may sometimes increase a desire for separate education. Some parents use legal procedures to opt out of religious education or to challenge its nature (186). Sometimes this is based on opposition to a

multi-faith syllabus [187]. While the most serious objections have been raised by Muslim parents [188], my examples show that these concerns are cross-religious.

Support for multi-faith religious education and implicit acceptance of non-confessionalism are also part of a pattern of response in several faiths, and may take several forms. The appeal of an open system is noted by a Hindu who understands his own faith to be non-dogmatic [189]. Where affective, aesthetic and spiritual approaches to religious education are tried, there is a natural affinity with some traditions [190]. Traditional concern for the transmission of piety and values, complementing and enriching knowledge, has some points of similarity with the non-confessional approach to spiritual and moral development [191]. A direct welcoming of multi-faith programmes comes more often from individuals in a faith than from its official representatives [192]; one exception to this is the reception given to the SCAA model syllabuses [193].

(c) Conclusion

This brief analysis of minority faith attitudes towards religious education has found considerable differences within the faith communities. In part these are explained by the pressures of their social, political and ethnic context; but there are also

traditional practices and attitudes which mirror Christian confessionalism. On issues such as methodology and the control of content, the resemblance is sometimes with confessionalism pre-Jungmann, or perhaps with the traditionalism of the 1950s. In the case of Judaism, considerable theological differences create educational disagreement; this also could be said of Christianity. While there is support and trust (194), there is certainly no clear minority faith endorsement of non-confessionalism; but even less is there a consensus on what might replace it.

4. Critical Evaluation of Divergence

The divergence between the two models of religious education is historically real. Confessional religious education, through its own evolutionary processes, gave birth to non-confessionalism, which gradually became a different and opposite entity. Scotland allowed the divergence to happen with greater clarity and wider public acceptance than in England; non-confessionalism is distinguished by a balanced epistemology and an alliance of religious and moral modes. Although the two models exist in their own separate structures, there is a unique potential for realignment. Minority faith communities are attracted to both models, but do not feel satisfied with non-confessionalism. Divergence

into two models need not, therefore, be accepted as final.

The assumption of two models is questioned in both traditions. This frequently takes the form of dissatisfactions about their own tradition, which may be soluble in terms of identifying with the other. Confessionalists' calls for realignment vary from modest suggestions of a generic relationship (195) through a desire for interaction (196), interest in teaching world religions (197), and co-operation on some Scottish courses (198), to a discussion of the fundamental differences which are radically questioned by scholars (199) and parents (200).

Among religious educators working in non-confessional settings, some of whom are members of faiths and therefore may have confessional leanings, there are dissatisfactions. The limitations of phenomenology as applied in schools were discussed above, and realisation of the problem produced the experiential movement as a form of compensation and enrichment. Unease about teaching many world religions (201) emerges, ironically, as a dynamic corresponding to confessionalist interest in them. The importance of personal knowledge and transformation as part of the process is more widely stressed (202). The retrieval of

spirituality in plural contexts is under discussion publicly and by individuals (203). Perhaps the most radical subversion of divergence assumptions is the suggestion that religious education and child evangelism may, after all, be consistent with each other, since both can be understood as forms of initiation (204). While some of the popular dissatisfaction may be explainable as prejudice or Christian commitment (205), it cannot all be reduced in this way, and leaves us with inescapable evidence of a desire for change.

Both traditions are now experiencing similar internal epistemological debates. The nature of knowledge in religion is defined by a polarity between cognitive and affective, informational and experiential. By and large, practitioners in both models see satisfaction only in a balance of these emphases; but they cannot always achieve this satisfactory balance within their own model: confessionalists must respond to the demands of doctrine and catechism, and non-confessionalists are likewise bound by national and local syllabuses. Under these pressures, the models begin to chafe. New epistemologies in both traditions attract each other with strong compatibility (206) which must draw practitioners ever closer.

Acceptance of a historically real divergence does not automatically mean philosophical endorsement of their natures or their present separateness. Returning to Arthur's symbol of the skull, we find in him an equal dislike for phenomenology and confessionalism:

> "In one, it is the religion which is stifled and smothered; in the other, it is the enquirer into religion" (207).

If there is death in both the old models, life must be sought in some evolutionary movement which affects the enquirer, the nature of the enquiry, and the subject-matter, thus gathering together my three analytical categories. Explorations of possible evolutionary realignment have taken place recently: the next chapter critically reviews and develops some of them.

Digest of Chapter 3

CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONVERGENCE THEORY

Chapter 3

CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONVERGENCE THEORY

1. Introduction and Method

In the last chapter, I showed how the two models had diverged in a real historical process influenced by theological, educational and other strands of thought. I detected signals of dissatisfaction in contemporary theorists of both models. This chapter explores and develops the dissatisfaction, by reviewing and where possible critically developing the work of theorists who have reached out to the opposite model in ways which suggest convergence.

Eight theorists are analysed, five of them non-confessionalists, three confessionalists, and some others are referred to in passing. All share a decision to address the models issue as unsatisfactory. Although their comments are an important prelude to convergence, their theoretical work thus far cannot deliver any further convergence.

This chapter analyses their work, not in groupings of confessional and non-confessional, but in terms of those who argue for a closer relationship between the

existing models, and those who argue for a new model. I call the first group reconcilers, the second prophets. Reconcilers include Slee, Rummery, Moran and Hull; prophets include Watson, Hill, Arthur and Wallace.

These umbrella terms of mine are not intended to be value judgements, nor do they exclude the possibilities that reconcilers may be prophetic, and prophets may be reconcilers. Given this flexibility, there is an openness to the two groupings touching each other at some points. For instance, Slee is classed below as a reconciler, working on the relationship of the two models; yet she does, in passing, refer to a middle way. She remains, however, in the reconciling group because she does not develop the middle way.

The reconcilers and prophets need each other. It would be difficult to envisage the success of any "prophetic" project for a new rationale and model of religious education, no matter how systematic, without some sustained previous work on reconciliation in order to shift the models towards each other; likewise, any reconciliation of models may prove hard, perhaps unsuccessful, if not enriched by a prophetic willingness to take new directions.

2. Critical Review of the Reconciling Theorists

(a) Nicola Slee

In her article in the British Journal of Religious Education, Slee posited two models, the confessional and the non-confessional [1]. The former model prevailed throughout history and was evident in early agreed syllabi. It has only become unsatisfactory for society because of recent social changes, such as industrialisation, the emergence of scientific knowledge and technological expertise, and secularisation [2]. The non-confessional model is both a response to the plural and secular context, and also a reflection of a particular philosophical approach to the study of religion which Slee criticises [3].

Slee deploys two arguments for reconciliation. First, by opposing the two models, we separate nurture from education in a way which produces false dichotomies damaging to education [4]. Growth can only occur out of a dialectic of the two models, not by separation. Second, both models are

> "driven outwards beyond their own confines to meet and embrace each other in a larger reality. Rapprochement between the two is not only possible, it is logically implied by each" [5].

For instance, the incarnation impels Christians to see and seek Christ everywhere, in all people and

places, while phenomenology is impelled to go beyond mere description to a personal encounter (6).

Slee's "middle way" model (7) is inspired by the thinking of Robert Jackson (8) and the Durham report, with its emphasis both on exploring "the place and significance of religion in human life" and also on "each pupil's search for a faith by which to live" (9). But her model also leans towards phenomenology (10). Slee suggests that this model is enfleshed in some English agreed syllabi (11) but goes no further in describing it.

Three critical comments can be made on Slee's contribution. First, her belief that both models are internally impelled towards each other is based, on the one side, on the Christian doctrine of the incarnation, and on the other, on the phenomenological doctrine of encounter. No mention is made of the inherent power of other religious phenomena, such as the prayer wheel or the Ka'aba, or of their importance as symbols which speak both universally and personally. The power of these phenomena can evoke varying responses in the most objective learner. The doctrine of the incarnation, as one such phenomenon, can also evoke a variety of responses, even among Christian learners. Not always will the doctrine of the incarnation "impel" Christian

learners in the direction of seeking Christ in all people and places; sometimes the response might be quite other. There does not seem any *necessary* impulsion from the Christian side to the phenomenological as a result of the doctrine of the incarnation. Rather, the reasons for any leaning towards convergence are more likely be in the area of professional and personal dissatisfaction with the model, as portrayed above in chapter 2.

Second, Slee's middle way model is undeveloped. It relies on the thinking of two earlier reports (12) which have already fed into the system in England and Wales and which are not dissimilar to the findings of SCCORE. It is legitimate to ask, therefore, in what sense her middle way model is different from the balance of "learning about" and "learning from" which is seen in these reports and which is re-emphasised in SCAA's model syllabuses (13).

Third, the middle way model is flawed by its author's acceptance of the power and right of the two polar positions to define the conflict. Slee offers a blend model rather than a more radical, dialectically derived third option. The middle way model, in its present form, occupies a position on the scale between confessional and phenomenological, and will constantly be subjected to movements on that scale. In the search

for a new model, positioning on the scale will always be problematic. Perhaps what is needed is to throw away the scale.

While Slee's raising of the issues in 1989 is important and provokes reflection, it is not strong enough to provide an escape from the divergent models, and therefore does not constitute a process of convergence in itself.

(b) Richard Rummery

For Rummery, the traditional catechetical approach of his own Roman Catholic church is firmly to be rejected because of its over-emphasis on authority and categorical statements and its belittling of the learner (14). He cites five supporting critiques of catechesis from within Catholicism (15). Using these to argue that Roman Catholic religious education has experienced a global crisis of identity, he places this crisis within a comparative framework with other models of religious education. Whereas Slee posits two models, Rummery sees four models at work, and distinguishes between them (16).

Model 1 is "Teaching That", and is described as the instruction of believers, happening within a circle of faith and having no wish to look outside the circle.

Arguably this form of education is, at the present time, less a hallmark of the churches than of the belief-system of the secular society [17]. Rummery, however, clearly meant this model to describe traditional catechesis.

Model 2 is "Educating In", and is described as encouraging an awareness of truth, in the context of a community of faith but with the ability and the desire to look outside and beyond the circle. Interestingly, his historical example of this model comes not from any church but from Inner London's model syllabus, Learning For Life [18]. This syllabus belonged to the immediate post-Goldman, neo-traditional era, which was aware of the limitations of traditional Bible-based R.E. but had not yet fully escaped from confessional thinking in terms of the anthropology of pupils and the content of religion.

Model 3 is "Teaching How", and is described as fostering an understanding and sympathetic view of religion from outwith the community of faith, willing and able to look in as far as possible. His historical example of this model is the Schools Council Working Paper No. 36 [19].

Model 4 is "Teaching About", and is described as providing knowledge and some understanding from an

objective standpoint which is clearly outwith the community of faith and does not wish to stand too close to it.

I can comment on Rummery's structure in several ways. First, it is clear from Rummery's sequencing of the four models that he sees the greatest distance between models 1 and 4. They are, however, similar in that Rummery clearly intends them both to have negative connotations and to be seen as closed systems.

Second, Rummery's positioning of models 2 and 3 together is designed to emphasise their similarities as open systems fostering communication between the learner, the teacher and the learnt material. Although they stand on either side of the gulf between being within or outwith a community of faith, they share an ability and a desire to span the gulf.

Third, Rummery points out how model 3 is Smart's development of the phenomenological approach, seeking, in Smart's phrase, to "transcend the informative" (20).

Rummery's contribution to convergence theory focuses on the relationship between models 2 and 3 both on a theoretical level and on the level of their historical manifestations, identified above, which he calls the London and Lancaster models (21). Although both historical documents have long since been

overtaken by other developments [22] there is, nevertheless, a detailed rigour and a further reach in Rummery's arguments, making them still significant in convergence theory.

Rummery's convergence argument takes four forms. He first focuses his efforts on spanning the gulf between models 2 and 3. For him, model 3 proposes something more than an "outside looking in" approach because its use of Smart's six dimensions broadens its approach from the merely cognitive to the aesthetic and experiential. In this, the role of the teacher is important, and personal faith can be a strong and legitimate influence [23]. Indeed, both models implicitly envisage the possibility of faith as an end-target or attainment in the religious education process, but they simply provide the approach and the experience which may result in that step; they do not force it [24]. Several other characteristics, such as openness and concern for human development, are also held in common by the two models [25].

Rummery identifies one possible way of spanning the gulf, calling it Roman Catholic selectivity [26]. In this relationship, confessionalist educators may take anything from the model 3 approach so long as Roman Catholic content is safeguarded. He argues that

this approach is limited and lacks understanding of both models 2 and 3 (27). I note in passing that Rummery rejects Roman Catholic selectivity because it is based on religious content alone as an analytical category. His approach is therefore in accord with my method of seeking agreement in broad theoretical terms (28), not only religious content.

Rummery seeks a deeper relationship delivering dialogue and convergence, and he sees the secondary years of age 14 to 16 as the best ground for this. The *animation culturelle* process (29), used in these years, is open, involves real appreciation of religion, uses empathetic and experiential dimensions, invites the cooperation of the adolescent, and is employable in confessional or non-confessional contents (30).

The potential for conflict between the model 2 teacher as evangelist and the model 3 teacher as educator is resolved crisply by Rummery. The teacher should show "theoretically and experientially" what it is for a person to be a believer; this duty subsumes the catechist's duty to lead pupils to belief (31).

The second step in Rummery's argument is to call for a separation of catechesis from confessional religious education. He sees this as essential, for three reasons. In the first place, school R.E. is not a

voluntarily gathered community of faith; in the second, some adolescents are, because of their developmental stage, in a state of "uncommitted or suspended belief"; third, open approaches (such as models 2 and 3 "may well be ideal ways of conducting the quest for faith" (32). In offering these arguments, Rummery begins to deploy anthropological and epistemological categories, but he does not use these terms, nor any equivalent to them, and does not develop the arguments.

As his third step, Rummery turns his attention to the principles of confessional religious education. He derives four principles (33) which are discussed and developed here.

Principle 1: Babin's *animation culturelle* can be legitimately used by the confessional teacher in a non-confessional context. Here Rummery is arguing for a one-way transferability of approach, from confessional to non-confessional. Positive and negative comments may be made on this principle. The positive aspect is that a quest for meaning process has been vindicated by the subsequent widespread acceptance of affective, experiential and personal search approaches. This acceptance has taken place in both sectors.

But if it is legitimate for the confessionalist to pursue an open model in the non-confessional sector, is

it also legitimate for the non-confessionalist (for sake of argument, a non-believer who stands outside the circle of faith) to pursue model 2 in the confessional sector? Rummery does not raise this question; the only clue to his possible answer is his openness to world religions study in confessional R.E. (34). His desire to bridge the gulf between models 2 and 3 would also suggest his openness to such an idea. There remains the question of whether the arrangements for such an approach could realistically be made in a particular system such as the Scottish denominational schools (35).

Principle 2: Success in the above process demands that the teacher understands his own faith, and also understands her own self, taking responsibility for avoiding a "teaching about" approach or an indoctrinating one (models 4 and 1 respectively). Rummery has more to say about the role of the teacher later. The importance of the teacher's own self-understanding, and developmental state, is returned to below in chapter 6.

Principle 3: It is possible for the committed confessionalist to act objectively in discussions. The teaching authority of the church should not be used as a discussion-stopper. In a rather ambiguous sentence, Rummery says that authoritative statements of the

church, for instance on moral matters, should be "welcomed as the statement of the beliefs which are shared by this faith community" (36).

This sentence seems to sit uncomfortably with his desire for openness and objectivity. Rummery surely knows all too well the negative effects of authoritative statements on moral matters in the secondary classroom context: his book was written two years before the election of Pope John Paul II, since when movements against dissident theologians and theological teachers have made this issue more urgent and painful (37). It is possible that if Rummery were revising his book now, he would wish to follow the process of open discussions on moral matters through to a different, and less ambiguous principle.

Principle 4: In confessional contexts, the pastoral element should not be lacking. Relationships, worship shared, the "moral quality of lives lived out as... God's pilgrim people" are factors creating a faith-community context for the education process, and are ideals to be striven for (38). Clearly we can recognise that in today's non-confessional schools, the pastoral element - often summed up in the single word "ethos" - is important and receives attention (39).

For his fourth and last step, Rummery discusses the role of teachers [40]. He calls for confessional teachers to be willing to share in dialogue with pupils, and to "teach for a vision of Christianity not yet discovered" [41]. This is taken to mean that teachers should be at such a developmental stage themselves that they are capable of sowing seeds for pupils' later development.

Rummery saw "strong lines of convergence" between models 2 and 3, but also some important differences and remains with some "perennial questions" [42]. He sees a tension between truth-claims and a liberating approach; a tension between the legitimate aspirations of confessional parents, and the wishes of a school to span the gulf between models 2 and 3; and he stresses the school's need to recognise the complexity of language in its attempts to build "platforms towards faith" [43]. This is especially true in the realm of religious language and a school's language about its own ethos.

Rummery's contribution provides no points against convergence, since he himself favours it. However, his argument presents some weaknesses which are enumerated here.

1. His argument is set in the context of Schools Council Working Paper No. 36, and has been overtaken by subsequent developments in R.E.

2. His example of a model 2 (educating in) approach comes from outwith the Christian or any other faith community, and is in effect a neo-traditionalist syllabus. This status does not rule it out as evidence; but Rummery is perhaps weak in offering, as evidence, a syllabus which does not belong in the appropriate category.

3. His willingness for confessionalists to try out a reformed, open version of catechesis (model 2) in non-confessional contexts is not matched by any clear willingness for reciprocal arrangements with non-confessionalists, of the sort favoured by Moran (44).

4. His position on authoritative moral teaching in confessional schools is ambiguous and seems to contradict his desire for openness, conversation and invitation.

5. His comparison of models 2 and 3 is fair, but he does very little to describe a new converged model. He seems to assume that the two models will continue, similar but separate.

Rummery's single, substantial point in favour of

convergence is that models 2 and 3 stand very close together and share common values such as openness, commitment to human development, and the need for teachers with commitment and self-knowledge. The two models, when shorn of their historical references to Babin and Working Paper No. 36, are still in existence and in circulation in classrooms. Rummery's legacy to convergence theory has been to demonstrate their closeness.

(c) Gabriel Moran

Moran writes from an American confessional situation and with a distinctive style of symbol and word-association. His approach to religious education is critical, international, and philosophical. He begins with a belief that, despite its various settings (confessional and non-confessional), it is fundamentally the same activity, but is subject to confusions of definition (45). He has an interest in liberation as an aim of education (46).

Moran's main model is intergenerational (47); teaching is an intergenerational conversation, which should seek neither to expound texts nor to subvert them, but should move beyond these poles to academic discourse (48).

Moran gives a double definition of religious education, seeing both as necessary:

> "(a) teaching people to be religious in a particular way
>
> 1. family
> 2. religious community
> 3. other institutions including school
>
> (b) academic instruction in religion
>
> 1. state school classroom
> 2. religiously affiliated school classroom" (49).

What is interesting about this definition is its arrangement. Three aspects are of importance. First, in the U.S. context, there is no state school religious education; Moran's inclusion of it in his definition is therefore either a call for it to be introduced, or an attempt at a global definition inclusive of systems such as the British one, or both.

Secondly, he places school and other institutions together with family and religious community (church, or other) under the heading of teaching people to be religious in a particular way. This is significant, because of the questions it raises. Moran is not exact about whether he is referring to public schools, or church schools, or all schools at this point. If he is including public schools in the U.S. context, this raises a further uncertainty. Is he suggesting some form of secular nurture into American civic values, perhaps centering on allegiance to the flag? If so, he

is suggesting a cultural parallel between religious and civic formation, similar to cultural efforts at parallel relations between school, home and community (50). On the other hand, it may be that Moran is suggesting some explicit type of religious formation through public school ethos (51). If so, he is breaking new constitutional and political ground by suggesting that religious formation can and should be taking place in them, and he is aligning himself with a view usually held by the religious right. Given Moran's other sympathies, for instance in the direcion of liberation, such an alignment would not be deliberate on his part. All we can say in conclusion is that this aspect of Moran's overview of religious education, while interesting, is in need of further development.

Thirdly, he places state school and religiously-affiliated school experiences together under an academic heading, detaching the latter from formative or nurturing processes which are included under the first heading. This is clearly suggestive of the detaching of catechesis from school religious education, argued for by Rummery and Rossiter (52), and assumed by the English Roman Catholic national Project (53). But he sees the two halves alternating with each other, and sees "no good reason" for excluding either from the meaning of religious education; also he claims

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Moran's inter-subjectivity harmonises well with the criticisms of the two models made by others. It is, however, explained mainly in terms of a tension or balance between old models, never fully escaping from this frame of reference. In this respect, it is similar to the work of Slee and Watson. Its positive points are that it clearly shows how characteristics of one model are needed by the other, and that it radically experiments between them. Moran's contribution is significant because of his attempt to transcend the North American context and to draw models together in ways appropriate for Britain. Inter-subjectivity may be akin to the personal search process, in which pupils are able to explore their own and others' beliefs and values sympathetically and open-endedly. Nevertheless, he still defines it between the critical and immersive poles, and gives tantalisingly little by way of a picture of this model; some of the details he does give, such as cross-religious teaching and the idea that Christian faith-nurture may be an outcome of a study of Hinduism, would need careful handling in a Scottish context. However, his work is capable of development in a convergence direction because it touches on a gentle epistemology of encounter between subjects. This quality, allied to his interest in liberative education, means that his work is a natural ally to convergence.

(d) John Hull

John Hull's exploration of the relation between confessional and non-confessional models is both substantial and tentative, and it will be argued here that Hull gives up his exploration too early. Despite this criticism, Hull's contribution to reconciliation-based convergence is of considerable depth and quantity; for this reason, and in order to analyse his ideas fully, the three analytical categories of anthropology, epistemology and religion will be used. The discussion also draws in other theorists whose work is relevant to his concerns.

Hull's theoretical contribution to school-age R.E. appears in two main works, New Directions in Religious Education (1982) and Studies in Religion and Education (1984) together with a wide variety of essays (60). His work includes philosophical issues around the rationale for religious education within a liberal-rational educational model; developmental psychology and its relevance to religious educators; Christian theology and education; legislation on, and public attitudes to, R.E. in the curriculum. A Christian within the Protestant tradition, Hull nevertheless takes a firm and unambiguous stand for a non-confessional approach to religious education,

distinguishing pithily between instruction, socialisation, indoctrination and education, and dismissing as improper all but the latter [61].

While it is impossible to question Hull's commitment to what he calls "critical openness" in religious education [62], there are indications that he views the divergence between Christian nurture and general education as unsatisfactory [63]. On the one hand, he argues that Christian nurture need not be indoctrinatory in character; and on the other, that critical openness is "essential for the continued vitality and relevance of Christian faith" [64]. Thus Christian nurture and general education may sometimes, but fundamentally need not, be hostile to each other [65].

Hull seems at ease with the notion of pupils being affected, and their faith challenged or changed, by religious education.

> "Handled with sensitivity and care, there is no reason why Muslim young people should not find their commitment to the mosque deepened and enriched by the religious education which they receive at school. The same goes for young people from all religious backgrounds and none" [66].

He is also insistent that religious education is based in, created by, and owned by the community which forms the context [67]. This matches, to some extent,

the parish and ecclesial context of confessional education.

Hull has a kind of educational faith. It is a vision of the educational journey in religion being important and sacred in itself:

> "I am not holy, I am not perfect, I am on the way. You also, I believe, are pressing on towards your own completion. We can complete each other. That is why the ground between us, the place where we meet, is holy ground" (68).

Hull is a theorist of the non-confessional model, clearly committed to non-confessionalism, who states in various different contexts, and to various nuanced extents, an openness to the confessional model and to the faith element. But to what extent does Hull see the models as consistent or convergent with each other? Where does he stop his discussion of the consistencies, and why does he stop it there? Could the discussion be taken further?

(i) Hull's Anthropology and Epistemology

Hull spends little time on questions of human identity, but holds an assumption of some consistency between Christian and secular views. For instance, Christian anthropology and a developmental view of humanity can go hand in hand, he argues, because the education process - as one which is never completed -

is open to the idea of infinite persons (69).

Human qualities such as rationality and personality are widely valued within and beyond religious communities, but beliefs in uniqueness and irreplaceability do not command such universal support (70).

Hull offers no convergence here, but rather a hierarchy of values in which basic consensus human qualities (such as rationality) are agreed widely, other higher values are agreed by religious viewpoints, and some particularly high values are offered by Christianity alone. The Christian value system, and possibly other religious systems, offer a higher, "more secure and richer" anthropology (71). He calls for a co-operation or conversation of anthropologies, involving as many credal positions as possible, to overcome division (72).

It is possible to deduce that Hull offers no consensus of human values, although some consensus values may be established, and he sees a need for all creeds and stances to cooperate on their understanding of the human person. Hull's work is not developed enough in this field for the obstacle to be better known or reduced. Hull's contribution to a convergence of anthropologies is inconclusive.

Some aspects of his work suggest a convergent epistemology. He shares some of the criticisms of the phenomenological way of knowing [73]. In a later work he stresses the human quest:

> "Religious education for both teacher and pupil is thus a path of self knowledge through a path which leads one out of self" [74].

The critical spirit is part of the logic of the Christian faith; therefore objective religious education is the product of Christian faith [75]. The Christian commitment of Christian teachers demands that they enter into the process of critical open enquiry; in fact, in this way they can demonstrate their Christian commitment [76].

However, Hull has a difficulty with the proposed outcome of a converged epistemology. The problem he sees is: how Christian nurture can be like education in possessing critical openness, yet unlike education in intending Christian life and faith [77]. In posing the problem in these terms, Hull assumes that Christian nurture intends Christian life and faith. This calls for a critical exploration of his assumption about intention [78].

In Christian nurture, the nurturer - group leader or teacher - will almost certainly "intend" Christian

life and faith in the learners as an outcome. The participants *may* so intend, but this is not certain, even in a denominational school. And the participants' agency is every bit as important and effective in the process. Also, the nurturer will have other intended outcomes in mind. In the context of school-based confessional religious education, the nurturer will almost certainly have educational outcomes as intentions, and these will qualify the first intention (79).

Further, to intend Christian life and faith means not the same as to manufacture or enforce it, and is therefore not akin to the processes of socialisation and indoctrination which Hull disavows (80). This suggests that Hull has posed the problem in terms which appear contradictory but which need not be so (81).

In summary, while intentions between educators in the two models may differ, no necessary difference exists. As a non-confessionalist, Hull is committed to the objective pursuit of religious knowledge yet critical of some extreme aspects of it; he supports a process which changes and forms young people. Christian educators who engage in critical and open study are fulfilling not only their professional duties, but also their religious ones. Hull may therefore be said to be mostly supportive of convergence.

(ii) Hull's Approach to Religion [82]

Hull develops his discussion of the models in this category in much more detail than for anthropology or epistemology. He sees religions not as fixed monoliths, but as "broad, flowing rivers of evolving culture and spirituality" [83]. The traditions change, mingle and are enriched by each other, much like the people who encounter them.

In one sense, Hull himself mingles Christian and post-Christian insights when he argues from Christian theology to a vision for non-confessionalism. His practical theology approach handles secular and religious movements of thought, tracing abstract principles within and between them, and making non-fundamentalist use of the Bible [84].

In terms of content, therefore, Hull clearly has no difficulties with convergence, and supports it. However, he detects four areas of tension between Christian nurture and general education (his terms, which roughly correspond to confessional and non-confessional religious education). As these four tensions belong to the content of religious education, and the way content is approached or handled, they are relevant to this third analytical category.

The four areas of tension are:

i. The finality of Christian faith as complete and perfect, *versus* critical openness upon it and within it;

ii. Authority as respectful obedience *versus* individual judgement and critical openness;

iii. Revelation *versus* reason;

iv. Spirituality as the spirit of discipleship and utter abandonment *versus* detached reserve (85).

Hull accepts the "humane and ethical status" of Christian education (86) and is keen to defend it against the charges of indoctrination levelled by Hirst and others. He does this by accepting part of Hirst's argument about the distance between Christian theology and critical education, but rejecting Hirst's absolute denial of any connection (87).

For Hull, much of the argument rests on what kind of theology is compared with critical education. He admits that some forms of theology - he probably has in mind fundamentalism - can only lead to a "primitive concept of education" (88), that is, an attempt at uniform transmission. But other forms of theology, in which "critical enquiry and controversial examination

flow directly and necessarily from the values and beliefs to which the theology is committed" [89] suffer no disqualification from a comparison with critical education.

The key to analysis of Hull's point lies in his phrase, "critical enquiry and controversial examination flow directly and necessarily from the values and beliefs to which the theology is committed". This is a careful phrase; it stipulates that, in order to qualify as being compatible with critical education, a theological approach must have a spirit of critical enquiry; and must have it not only as its adopted method, but flowing from its very beliefs and values, and not only by implication but centrally and explicitly [90].

How many contemporary theologies could meet that condition? Hull offers only one example, that of secular theology [91]. Surely process theology, with its relational and non-dogmatic character, can be added [92]; almost certainly, the feminist emphasis on connectedness, narrative and symbol, as methodological replacements for dogma and fixed positions [93], should qualify; arguably, the work of inter-religious thinkers such as Zaehner, Pannikar and Hick [94] would do so. Even the intensive and investigative approach of Karl Rahner, and the critical analyses worked out by

liberation theologians, might be included. Or do such theologies appear too directed towards particular doctrinal or social ends to qualify for compatibility with openness? Hull's relative silence on possible theologies is an unnecessary brake on his quest for dialogue and convergence.

We return to Hull's four tensions and discover an issue underlying them all: is it possible for a theologian to take a stance and still be committed to critical openness?

(iii) Final Comments on Hull's Position

Hull takes his discussion to a point where he identifies seven differences between Christian and secular religious education [95] which, as he expresses them, form an obstacle to convergence theory unless they can be resolved. My description of these points is followed by my response which seeks to clarify whether and in what direction Hull's argument can be developed further. Each response ends with my suggestion about whether the detailed difference forms an obstacle to convergence theory.

i. A difference of intention [96]. This is taken to mean that critical educators intend only critical outcomes; Christian educators or theologians intend and

hope for faith-content-related outcomes.

Response: The point about intention was discussed under Hull's epistemology above, where it was argued that it forms no necessary obstacle to convergence. Christian educators may hope and intend according to their faith; but these hopes and intentions are in addition to, and qualified by, their other educational intentions (97). An additional dimension to an enterprise, which allows itself to fit into the other dimensions, does not necessarily make it a different enterprise. It is suggested that this difference is contestable.

ii. Christian theology is a servant of faith always, and only sometimes a servant of education (98). Christian theology, which may be understood as a network of arguments, experiences and information, will always be put to use to defend faith, and only sometimes to educate.

Response: This statement is not demonstrated. The same theology may be put to different uses by different users, depending on their motive, developmental stage, and faith content. Several contemporary theologies such as the secular theologies and the Sea of Faith movement appear to be more committed to the educational process of opening up issues for critical examination than to

the defending of faith positions. Hull himself believes that theology is the lord of nurture yet servant to education (99). He opts for critical openness and faith being merely compatible, not necessarily supportive (100). In this logic, nurture, governed by a critical open theology, is made over to the educational domain, but education itself is not transformed or shifted by this operation. This becomes a one-way convergence argument, unable to transform both models. While doing nothing to undermine wider convergence theory, this is hardly supportive of it.

iii. Christian nurture is a domestic activity of the church; education is a public activity of the state (101).

Response: This is obvious and incontestable; but what does it really mean? Within the church, the education taking place will be by Christians and with Christians; under the aegis of the state, the education taking place has a wider range of participants, including Christians. No necessary difference is implied by this distinction. When developed, it forms no necessary obstacle to convergence theory.

iv. The two have different pedagogical characteristics. Whereas religious education usually implies looking at more than one faith, nurture means

looking only at one's own faith [102]. Nurture is, however, distinct from indoctrination.

Response: Content itself forms a real, though decreasingly important distinction in the light of the introduction of world religions material into confessional programmes [103]. Other than content, it is not clear what pedagogical characteristics he means. My analysis of the historical development of the confessional tradition [104] showed that while some pedagogical characteristics such as the catechism and repetition may belong historically to the confessional model, and others such as pupil centred learning be associated with the non-confessional model, there is no argument that these or any pedagogical characteristics necessarily belong with one model and not with the other. I provided examples of open and pupil-centred learning in the confessional tradition. This difference therefore has little importance.

v. Nurture takes place within a faith, whereas education only invites the pupil to *imagine* what it would be like to be inside a faith [105].

Response: There can be no denial of the force of this point. Non-Christian participants in a religious education programme which does not intend or result in their conversion can do no more than imagine; they see

Christian faith from the outside.

But it is Hull's use of the word "only" which attracts attention. Only invites? Education can do no more than invite, if it is to avoid charges of indoctrination. Only to imagine? The power of pupils' imagining can be considerable, and has been harnessed widely in the affective-experiential approach to religious education. The word "only" suggests a negative value-judgement on invitation and imagination; yet these are seen in education as positive qualities. Using invitation and imagination, pupils viewing Christianity from the outside may experience it very profoundly and in life-changing ways without entering into the Christian fold. There is no necessary difference in the impact a faith will make. This argument, therefore, cannot stand as a fundamental difference between models.

vi. Education in religion is appropriate for all; Christian nurture is appropriate for Christians [106].

Response: In its obvious incontestability, and in its content, this point is similar to point iii. Hull is arguing that an activity which takes place among Christians, and is shaped by them, is different from a similar activity taking place with other people who shape it in their way. Each activity, as shaped, is

appropriate for its own context and ought not to be generally imposed outwith the context. Hull adds that Christian nurture is based on the belief that there can be Christian children [107]; but this belief only materially affects the Christian education context. There is an element of circularity in this argument. Hull has not demonstrated that anything is different other than the context. It is suggested that this difference forms no necessary obstacle to convergence theory.

vii. Christian nurture takes place in the context of worship, an ethos quite different from that provided by education [108].

Response: This is a specific and accurate difference. However, it is arguably lessened by the appropriate use of affective-experiential techniques in non-confessional education. These techniques can serve to help a pupil into the mind and heart of worship, for instance through meditation. Other aids such as artefacts - incense to smell, objects to handle - and music and video can also serve to reduce the distance. Moreover, worship is in itself an educational tool [109]. While it may be a different ethos to education, it is certainly not an anti-educational ethos.

It is suggested that this difference is specific

and accurate, but that the distance between the two models in this respect can be and is being reduced. It is not possible to envisage that it will be reduced completely.

A concluding comment from Hull underlines both the marginal, tentative nature of these seven differences and his own openness to seeing the debate on them continued (110).

(iv) Conclusion on Hull

In summary, Hull's thought yields the following points against convergence:

i. Four areas of tension exist between theology and critical enquiry. But it has already been argued by Hull that these areas depend on the character of the theology being pursued; I have suggested other forms of theology which might qualify as critical and thus reduce or neutralise the tension.

ii. Seven detailed differences, stated briefly and baldly, exist between Christian theology and general education. But it has been argued here that these differences are not all obstacles. Of the seven, two are contestable; three are incontestable but when developed show no necessary obstacles; and two are specific and accurate, but the differences they make

are increasingly unimportant, although they probably will not vanish completely.

The following points are supportive of convergence:

i. The intensity and extent of his grappling with the issue [111] indicate a sympathetic concern with the relationship as a general theme of his work.

ii. Certain non-fundamentalist theologies can be consistent with the spirit of critical enquiry, and other theologies might also qualify for this.

Although he stops short of any full advocacy of a programme of convergence, he lays considerable groundwork for it and is sympathetic to it, especially in the third working category of religion. I conclude that the point at which he stops short is not the furthest point to which his own arguments can be taken.

(e) Other Possible Reconcilers

Before leaving the reconcilers, it is important to take into account the work of some confessionalists who have shown some interest in reconciling the models. One of these is the evangelical theorist Trevor Cooling [112]. His personal commitment to exploring the gap between teaching and faith commitment, and his desire to harmonise the two - in his words, "to make an honest

man of myself" (113) might make him a contender for a place as a reconciler or re-aligner of the models. But Cooling conducts his argument mainly on the basis of a critique of liberal rationality (114) and a defence of the rationality of religious belief (115). While his arguments are defensible, his strategy amounts not to reconciliation but to an attempt at winning one side over to the other, which does not in my view constitute reconciliation.

The American Roman Catholic Mary Boys attempts a shifting of the boundaries to encompass more than Christian R.E., but with her identification of generative themes such as theology, revelation, tradition and liturgy (116), she never succeeds in breaking out of a Roman Catholic voice. In a very similar way, the Australian Roman Catholic Terence Lovat argues for an integrated model (117) and succeeds to some extent in passing beyond confessional interests into a treatment of other religions and the dropping of faith assumptions. But the examples are predominantly Christian (118), and he assumes that a majority of learners will be from a Christian background.

Cooling, Boys and Lovat are examples of confessionalism taking an interest in its relationship with world religions and open approaches, but not yet

engaging them with the systematic thought and degree of openness to qualify them as reconcilers.

James Arthur's work on Catholic education touches little on religious education, but arguing that present legislation makes it harder for Roman Catholic schools to fulfill their holistic function [119], and points - presumably with approval - to various measures taken by denominational schools to make themselves more open to a multi-faith society [120].

3. Critical Review of Prophetic Theorists

Prophecy and prophetic arguments in this context mean arguments which attempt to strike out beyond the framework of the two models, towards the construction of a third model. Four such prophetic arguments are critically reviewed here.

(a) Brenda Watson

Watson's contribution is in part a development of Slee's but is also based on new thinking about the social basis and purpose of religious education.

Watson's main premise concerns society itself. Secular society is an indoctrinating organism inducting young people into its own belief system; pupils need the skills and awareness to question this, and

theorists need to turn their accusations of indoctrination away from religious educators and towards the secular society.

> "Most people have not been indoctrinated into religious faith but into a questioning or ignoring of religion..."

Pupils cannot have a sympathetic understanding of religion

> "if their minds are already sealed tight against it....R.E. needs to sow seeds of doubt into the current widespread acceptability of secularism" (121).

Two points may be made about this premise. First, it has potential for positive engagement with movements which question consumerism and which attempt to raise awareness of human rights and environmental awareness. Second, it moves from the confessional-phenomenological spectrum which formed the flawed framework of Slee's contribution (122); instead, it furnishes us with a framework in which religious education may be defined by human and global needs rather than by old polar positions on religion.

Watson is not unaware of these old positions, and she identifies three distinct rationales for religious education, the confessional (nurture within a faith), the "Highest Common Factor" model (a phrase coined by Watson to describe an approach based on consensus

values and avoiding controversies) and thirdly the phenomenological model (a multi-faith or world religions approach, based on Smart). Each of these is briefly criticised, the first for its failure to take account of religious plurality, the second for being not sufficiently focused on the religions themselves, and the third for its distortive effect on the learner's perceptions of religions [123].

Having identified the old rationales, Watson proposes a

> "possible rapprochement between these approaches which tries to bring together what is good about them, and add what they all tend to omit" [124].

The rapprochement process can be described in three steps. The first is "overcoming false polarisation" [125]; here Watson returns to her main premise on the secular society, and argues that rather than religions being compared against each other, they should more realistically be seen together in contrast and in opposition to the forces of prejudice and acquisitiveness [126].

The second step is to suggest how the confessional and phenomenological models should be changed. The confessional model needs to be "broadened", the phenomenological "deepened". Confessionalism is "intolerant and ungenerous" when it "fails to affirm

the insights of those who start off from a different confession... it must find a way of affirming the experience of others". Phenomenology must acknowledge with humility its own assumptions about the value of the objective approach and the possibility of bracketing out (127).

The third step is her description of a new approach which is called "essentialist R.E." This approach takes seriously the legitimate concerns of the three models, and it encourages interconnectedness of insights between the three, opposing isolationism (128). It focuses on what is essential educationally for each pupil, rather than starting with content from religions.

Three important concerns of an essentialist approach are a responsibility to society (promoting moral education and encouraging tolerance), educational concern (developing a grasp of religious concepts, promoting pupils' search, countering stereotypes) and coping with controversy (promoting constructive responses and discouraging any resort to dogmatism) (129).

Watson's outline of an essentialist approach takes a step beyond Slee, doing more to describe a new model and thus going further towards a convergence position.

However, Watson too falls short of a full convergence argument.

Her use of the word "rapprochement", suggesting movement from extreme positions towards some centre ground, is perhaps not helpful. Rapprochement does not fully exploit the potential of her main premise on the need for a critical understanding of, and release from, the indoctrinating power of secular society. Her desire is to see a curriculum marshalling the religions together in a new configuration ranged against destructive social forces. The liberating power of this idea should help her to transcend the old categories more than she does. As she briefly describes it, rapprochement is not entirely free of the methodological weaknesses of compromise and of being defined by polar positions, weakneses which were more obviously present in Slee's middle way model.

(b) Chris Arthur

Arthur is strongly critical of the negative features of confessional and non-confessional approaches equally. Adequate religious education is "disturbingly rare" (130); both approaches are guilty of having "stifled and smothered" (131) the learner or the content. Finding phenomenology "unsatisfactorily

untidy" as a concept [132], he rejects it as a "vehicle" (model) for the "religionist" (learner). Instead, he offers tentatively the model of interpolation - "as a prototype, not a production model" [133].

Interpolation begins with anthropological and epistemological assumptions. Anthropologically, Arthur believes that human beings inhabit the same house, but different worlds, and thus share a solidarity of common human experience and understanding:

> "...because we are all in the same house we can therefore at least see into and understand - if not agree and sympathize with - our different worlds" [134].

From this stance, it is possible to deduce an epistemological position in his work:

> "from a starting point of shared likeness what is initially unfamiliar and alien may be investigated with a reasonable hope of eventually understanding it" [135].

The learner is existentially involved in study [136], uniting my three categories. Interpolation as a method then becomes

> "a placing of oneself in a range of different religious situations, and attuning one's ear to all their various rhythms and rhymes until a sense of belonging appears" [137].

It is an existential act with resemblances to

Groome's fifth movement [138] and to Smart's enquiry model. Smart believes in the possibility of dealing with religion both "scientifically" and "warmly" [139]. Arthur has sought to enhance the warmth while retaining the science.

Arthur is alive to the difficulties and distance to be travelled in order for a genuine encounter with a radically different religion to be possible. The "radical unlikeness" of the ineffable or non-finite realities of religion are ever-present. But this unlikeness may act as a stimulant to the learner, provoking reflectiveness and perhaps even causing the learner to consider new questions, new terms of reference, new perceptions [140]. Thus the main difficulty with an encounter is turned into a "generative" opportunity [141].

Arthur is also conscious of the questions left unfinished in his thesis. Of his three unfinished questions [142], two have relevance for convergence theory and point to weaknesses in Arthur's contribution to it.

The relationship between interpolation, reason and faith is raised by Arthur [143]. This forms the second of Arthur's unfinished questions. The relationship is uneasy; interpolation seems to stand unsteadily on both

reason and faith, with no resolution of how they might complement or confront each other.

The third of the questions focuses on the vehicle. Interpolation is a slow vehicle, and the subject matter to be studied in a lifetime is vast (144). A slow vehicle requires patience, care and sustained travelling time. Are such qualities sufficiently available in an educational system so controlled and so dependent on quick results? Perhaps this is not so much a weakness in Arthur's vehicle as a challenge to the system.

Although Arthur's premise is dissatisfaction with both models, his vehicle is nevertheless designed and built in a non-confessional yard. Although critical of the phenomenological tradition, he owes more to it than his conclusions overtly show. Assumptions about comparison of religions still lurk in his attempt to discover "which, if any, of the world certainties" is true (145) and in his statement that being acquainted with religious phenomena necessarily poses a dilemma of choice (146); and fact-based teaching assumptions remain in his belief that a learner will be unreflective because uninformed, or - by implication - reflective because informed (147). Arthur's work penetrates theoretical levels deeper than other

contributors, but does not succeed in offering substantial reasons for, or ways to, convergence. He himself accepts that his vehicle needs to be test piloted (148).

(c) Brian Hill

Hill's chief concern is to combat the sense of religious relativism which he says may sometimes arise from study of world religions. He enquires into whether pluralistic Religious Studies fosters religious relativism (149). He describes relativism as either a reduction of all religion to emotions or as a form of universalism, neither position being intellectually satisfactory (150). He is therefore driven to search for a way of presenting multi-faith study without pre-supposing a relativistic outcome.

Lest he be understood as placing all the onus of justification on non-confessionalists, Hill also places an expectation on Christian schools, namely that they should avoid any

> "failure to help students to develop a critical consciousness towards the religious pluralism of their society" (151).

Hill therefore seeks to steer the educator in such a direction to avoid both the Scylla of pre-emptive bias to religious relativism, and the Charybdis of pre-

emptive bias to religious absolutism. This makes his concern for a middle way similar to those of Slee and Watson, but at a slightly deeper theoretical level.

Hill presents a model of "impartial-exemplary study" (152) which can study other world religions even from within confessional school contexts. Hill briefly outlines seven features of the model, including awareness of the influence of truth-claims upon believers, critical examination and evaluation of belief claims and moral values, and professional restrictions on teachers and on assessment (153).

These are uncontroversial in confessional eyes when applied to the study of *other* world religions. However, these same features may cause some controversy and some interesting results if applied to *their own* religion. For instance, awareness of the influence of truth-claims, and critical examination and evaluation of belief claims and moral values, open up the faith of the community to the same critical approach as world religions study, and distance the faith from its believers in a way which can be creative, freeing and subversive (154).

Hill's brief contribution to convergence theory carries no arguments against a convergence; its main weakness, however, is its brevity and its failure to

describe the new model in detail. Another weak link is his inclusion of world religions, without any fully explored rationale or set of aims, and without any strong insistence on the spiritual development which confessional educators would look for in any educational encounter.

Hill's model does, however, have four positive features. He places expectations on both models, avoiding one-way convergence; study of world religions is guided by the principle of the needs of the local community (155); empathy and tolerance are mentioned as part of his seven principles, although their presence is not developed, nor is the way in which they can be fostered explained (156); and the teacher is to enter a personal encounter with religions and with pupils, but with boundaries about expounding or testing commitments (157).

Therefore Hill's contribution to convergence theory has positive features, but is weak in offering no substantial converged model.

(d) Bruce Wallace

For many years R.E. Adviser for Lothian Region, Wallace can claim to be the only authentically Scottish voice among the reconcilers and prophets, *pace* Arthur's briefer Scottish experience. Wallace's thesis rehearses

and develops many of the problematical points of the two models discussed elsewhere [158] before going on to offer a model of religious learning set free of the old restraints through the choices and flexibility of computer technology.

He offers a new model based on world view formation, a concept perhaps adapted from Smart's world view analysis [159]. However, his model also seeks to be developmental, taking into account the work of Fowler among others [160]. He is critical of the dimensional-existential distinction which he sees in the work of Grimmitt and in the second SCCORE bulletin [161]. He wishes to embrace the critical openness of phenomenology together with the focus on personal relevance in confessionalism, and he offers the LivesCan personal profile on CD Rom as a paradigm for world view formation with a potential for personal development, critically open choice, and interactivity [162].

Wallace characterises his world view formation model by its processes. These include the pupil in becoming more perceptive, responsible in a social context, avoiding alienation, learning to become self-aware and self-confident, and participating actively in order to form their own meaning and future [163].

This process, according to Wallace, takes place not only in the classroom, butthrough nurture (164), numinous experiences, study, and practice, these paths being seen as not mutually exclusive (165).

His implicit anthropology sees pupils as whole persons, and fosters their development along physical, emotional and spiritual planes, among others (166); it also argues for a view of human beings as irreplaceable (167), offering thereby some consistency with traditional Catholic theology of the soul. However, the anthropology is not developed.

Beyond his strong general emphasis on the fusion of critical openness and personal relevance, Wallace offers no detailed epistemological framework for religious learning.

His treatment of religion does, however, contain important positive characteristics for a new model. He is open to the possibility of religious learning involving an encounter with ultimate reality but wants this to be free of any particular perspectives (168). He then conducts a careful argument for an approach to ultimate reality which is open and critical, assuming nothing, on the grounds that any encounter takes place in a secular context. While acknowledging that this approach will not attract some in the confessional

tradition, his argument is still persuasive philosophically to some, and is worth quoting extensively:

> "The only possibility of our discovering Ultimate Reality is through our being in the world... no conceptual tool which depended on an acceptance of Ultimate Reality could be considered appropriate in the secular context... In the paradigm then, God is a possibility not a prerequisite. While this might cause concern to those for whom God is a theological *a priori*, I take the view that every theology, like every theory, is in principle falsifiable, in other words provisional. That is a principle which I believe it is important for religious learners to discover and apply. This does not mean that there are no absolutes,... nor does this mean that we cannot act as though <u>they</u> are final" (169).

Wallace envisages the question of God being left open for the sake of inclusiveness and because all theological matters are in the end open. By implication, other basic theological questions such as evil and salvation should be similarly treated. This argument commands some respect. It somewhat resembles Smart's soft epistemology (170). However, unfortunately - as Wallace accepts - this approach is unlikely to command the satisfaction of all confessionalists, although I suggest it will satisfy some.

With its application of technology, its developmental concern, its use of Smart and its new insight into the approach to religion, Wallace's prophetic model is an exciting and important

contribution to re-alignment of the models. However, there are weaknesses which limit the possibility of this model bringing about substantial convergence. These, I suggest, are of two kinds.

The first concerns a confusion about the location and nature of religious learning. Wallace argues that all religious education happens in a secular context but can still investigate traditions and raise issues (171). From this, we would assume that he includes Roman Catholic and other faith-based schools as part of the wider Scottish and global secular context; yet he appears to restrict his model to secular schools only (172) and thereby to undermine the hope of offering something universally applicable. Wallace also opens himself to the religious experience movement and accepts that direct personal encounters with ultimate reality are part of religious learning. We can agree with this but are still left wondering whether it is his view that such experiences belong in the classroom, or should rather be part of the general background only.

A second weakness concerns the dependence of the model on technology, specifically CD Rom. Installation costs and access issues apart, the widespread use of such machines would surely raise questions about the

abiding value, for the child's spiritual and moral development, of encounters with people, sharing, silent contemplation, the written and spoken word, and other experiences in the wider world. An educator mindful of the need for spiritual development is usually also aware of the dangers of the technocratic mindset and might not, therefore, rush to embrace LivesCan as an absolute solution.

Even with these two weaknesses, Wallace's religious learning presents an important step towards convergence, especially in his understanding of, and argument for, the treatment of religion.

(e) Conclusion

The eight theorists analysed here may all be seen as sympathetic predecessors to a convergence theory, in two different ways.

The first way, adopted by Slee, Rummery, Moran and Hull, is to make a careful examination of the middle ground and offer a new evaluation of it which suggests a closeness between models. Far the most enthusiastic proponents of a shrinking middle ground are Moran and Rummery, both confessionalists; Hull writes with more caution and a sympathetic hope tempered by intellectual reservations which are real to him, although open to questioning and development. Thus while the work of

Slee, Rummery and Moran can be said to come to a halt, the work of Hull has been developed further and can yield more towards middle-ground meeting.

The second way, that of Watson, Arthur, Hill (to a limited extent) and Wallace, is to suggest a new model which would occupy central ground and thus satisfy practitioners of both present models. However, the models suggested have weaknesses, usually because they refer themselves to the two old models or lack sufficient detail in terms of theoretical rationale. Despite the weaknesses, the "prophetic" models have important characteristics, such as openness, personal knowledge and a concern for spirituality, which are attractive for convergence.

It has been argued here that the theorists who stop short of proposing a new theory either do so for good reasons, or could have continued their journey; while the new models have weaknesses. All eight theorists have, therefore, contributed to a climate of convergence, and elements of their work are essential as conditions for the formation of a converged model; but since none of them has adequately described a converged model, the argument has not yet reached its fullest conclusion. This task, at theoretical and practical levels, still remains to be done.

Digest of Chapter 4

TESTING CONVERGENCE (1): THEORETICAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN GROOME, GRIMMITT AND RODGER

Chapter 4

TESTING CONVERGENCE (1): THEORETICAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN GROOME, GRIMMITT AND RODGER

In this chapter, my intention is to look at the ideas of the Roman Catholic religious educator and R.E. theorist, Thomas Groome, and explore the compatibility of his ideas with non-confessional sources, in particular the thinking of Michael Grimmitt and Alex Rodger. To measure the compatibility, I use the three analytical categories of anthropology, epistemology and religion. I also briefly examine their compatibility on the level of practical outworking. I conclude with an evaluation of their compatibility and the extent to which it permits convergence.

1. Thomas Groome

Groome's most significant works on religious education are his two books, Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (1980) and Sharing Faith (1991). In these books, Groome carves out a philosophical rationale for religious education from Christian and post-Christian sources. He also develops a distinctive five-step method for teaching and learning, known as shared Christian praxis.

Groome's thinking is not the only theoretical work on religious education. Other prominent and original theorists worldwide include the American Gabriel Moran, the English Michael Grimmitt and John Hull, the Scottish Alex Rodger, the German Karl-Ernst Nipkow, and the Australian Graham Rossiter. These are figures from both confessional and non-confessional backgrounds, whose work is known and respected in both of the divergent contexts. It is, therefore, relevant to reflect on why Groome's work is chosen for particular attention in this chapter.

In his earlier work, Groome focuses on a careful definition of religious education as

> "a deliberate attending to the transcendent dimension of life, by which a conscious relationship to an ultimate ground of being is promoted and enabled to come to expression" (1).

This open definition is overtaken, but not contradicted, by his definition of Christian religious education as

> "a political activity... that deliberately and intentionally attends... to the activity of God in our present, to the story of the Christian faith community, and to the vision of God's Kingdom" (2).

The first reason for choosing Groome in particular is that he offers these two definitions, one of non-confessional religious education, the other of

confessional, and he sets up no necessary contradictions between the two definitions. His theoretical framework therefore seems to have potential for a possible theory of convergence.

Groome's work is rooted and practised totally within the confessional Christian, and mostly the Roman Catholic, context. He sees religious education as a political activity because it is oriented towards the coming reign of God (3) and also because, as education, it is an intervention in people's lives aimed at influencing how they live (4). He is very clear that Christian religious education can and must confidently operate in all three of the cognitive, affective and volitional domains (5). Faith, as a gift of God expressed by and in the faith community, must take its shape as cognition (knowing), as relationship (desiring, or feeling) and as behaviour (doing). With support from scripture and from Tillich's definition of faith as "an act of the total personality" (6), Groome emphasises the triad of knowing, desiring and doing, and moulds them together as a unitary aim called "conation" or "wisdom" (7). For him, "conation in Christian faith" subsumes the cognitive, affective and the volitional into one synthesis, one whole desired outcome for Christian religious education (8).

Four points of significance form reasons for choosing Groome. The first is his evident consistency with confessional catechetical theory. In using the triad of knowing, desiring and doing, Groome is consciously consistent with the best of the ancient tradition of catechesis and faith nurture outlined in chapter 2 (9). More recent catechetical thinking is also reflected in Groome's triad. His critique of cognitivism is backed by his claim that education, including religious education, has over-emphasised the cognitive to the detriment of the affective and volitional domains (10). It can therefore be said of Groome's vision that it strikes no new position, but rather harmonises not only with ancient and contemporary catechetical thinking, both expert and official. Groome's theory is not eclectic; it is at the heart of the confessional tradition of religious education.

The second consideration concerns Groome's analytical method. For him, any rationale for religious education must be based in a healthy, holistic epistemology (11). Groome also calls for religious education to have a theory of being, for which he uses the word ontology (12), based on positive features (13). Groome's use of Christian and other sources, and his choice of two analytical categories which correspond with mine, make the task of evaluating his

applicability more objective and reliable as a test.

The third consideration is Groome's openness to a variety of sources. To support his triadic vision of conation, Groome goes behind the enlightenment tradition to access scripture and thinkers as diverse as Spinoza and Cicero (14), and beyond the Christian tradition to access Heidegger, Adorno and Daly (15). His scope of epistemological and ontological reference is considerable, is unique among confessional theorists, and seems open to building a rationale from sources which have traditionally been regarded as divergent and contradictory.

The fourth consideration focuses on Groome's practical method, known as shared Christian praxis. The five movements of praxis are designed to provide a "participative and dialogical" method enabling critical reflection, access to the Christian tradition, and personal appropriation of that tradition leading to personal and communal action oriented towards the reign of God (16). Taking place usually in ecclesial contexts, handling Christian dogmatic content, and explicitly directed towards the values of the reign of God, this praxis is undeniably Christian and confessional. And yet a shared praxis approach, used for faith education in other faith traditions, reflecting their particularity, is not ruled out (17).

The work of Thomas Groome is therefore chosen because his approach, while firmly rooted in and faithful to one confessional tradition, has at first sight some common ground with non-confessional theory and practice. It is with Groome, if anywhere, that a theory of convergence between the two models might prove both workable and representative of other possibilities. Evaluating Groome's work for its applicability to the non-confessional context is, therefore, a miniature, but symbolically important test of convergence theory.

2. Michael Grimmitt

Grimmitt's two major published theoretical works are What Can I Do In R.E.? (1973) and Religious Education and Human Development (1987). In them, he develops a theory which is both thoroughly non-confessional and distinctive. His first theoretical work opens with a critique of "Religious Instruction" [18], in particular its legal status, its professional profile and its curricular philosophy in the English system. He then develops a curricular argument for the subject based on educational grounds [19]. Firmly committed to the non-confessional model of religious education, he downplays any need for a theological rationale for it:

> "Religious educators are essentially secular educators... their prime commitment is to the achievement of educational goals" [20].

His earlier work took account of the developmental work of Goldman, Loukes and others [21] but was critical of Goldman's "Readiness for Religion" material, which he called "neo-confessional" [22]. By reflecting on the implications of developmental research, Grimmitt was able to offer a theory and examples for his existential approach [23] based on depth themes and other thematic approaches. He also took account of Smart's dimensions of religion and used this model to generate what he called the dimensional approach [24], a more explicit handling of religious concepts. He identified how these two approaches might best fit in to the stages of primary and secondary education [25], giving his work a practical orientation.

In his 1987 work, Grimmitt explores curricular theory [26] and theories of human development [27] in search of a developmental justification for religious education. He develops his depth themes into a systematic description of the adolescent "life-world" [28] on which a religious curriculum is built [29].

My choice of Grimmitt is explained by his strong rootedness in secular thinking, more so than others

(30). His commitment to a secular, assumption-free philosophy is bold and determined, based not on particular beliefs but on a reflection about the central importance of beliefs and values to human development (31). Indeed, he is "very dubious" about the possibility of identifying common core values in secular plural society, and even - if they are identified - about the wisdom of attempting to teach them (32). He is resistant to any emphasis on transformative outcomes and suspicious of the promotion of religious consciousness (33).

On the other hand, Grimmitt is no uncritical advocate of phenomenology. His criticisms of this approach (34) show his concern that the learner should have a real encounter with the learned material of the religion, not a simulated one (35). He believes that bracketing out "invalidates the educational process" (36) leaving the learner anaesthetised from any personal encounter. He is against the mere ammassing of factual information (37). He is sympathetic to the view that any approach to studying a religion needs to share the assumptions of that religion, or risk distorting it (38).

Grimmitt is strongly committed to the non-confessional model and to the search for its secular justification. While seeing the need for a rationale

which escapes the dryness of phenomenology, he is suspicious of attempts to shape pupils' beliefs or identities as neo-confessionalism. He shows no visible sympathy for any rapprochement or convergence between the models. Both for his rootedness in non-confessionalism and for his distinctiveness, he is a real counterpart to Groome, and thus a suitable element in a theoretical test of convergence.

3. Alex Rodger

Alex Rodger writes from the non-confessional context of religious education in Scottish schools. His main theoretical work is Education and Faith in an Open Society (1982) and his thinking on values education in secular contexts is extended in subsequent papers (39).

Rodger sees a difference between Christian education and religious education (40). He is insistent that the plural society - meaning a Scottish, British and global society in which there is no moral or dogmatic consensus - is the context for religious and moral education. This plurality provides no clear, uniformly agreed theoretical base for the moral development of children (41).

Nevertheless, he is committed to a religious and

moral education which is public and integrative, retaining the Scottish strength of holding religious and moral strands together in a way that is of personal relevance to the pupil [42]. His commitment to searching for a theoretical base for this is continuing in his work on values education [43].

Although clearly committed to a plurally-based religious education, he is not closed to a convergence theory. He speaks of a "shared educational faith" which underlies the educational process, which brings together shared social values, and which is "compatible but not identical with" Christian faith [44]. He would not divorce the two models of religious education completely; when confronted with the question of whether religious education is religious or secular, he answers "neither, because both" [45]. He takes the secular principle of impartiality with great seriousness, elevating it to the educational equivalent of the Golden Rule, placing on teachers an obligation to provide fairness and consideration [46]. He argues that a return to a confessionalist model of transmitting orthodoxy would signal a failure of the pupil's wider education [47].

While holding to impartiality, he also believes that religious education should focus on the spiritual development of pupils, not only in terms of

understanding, nor even of attitudes, but also involving the pupil as a "person on a process of encounter" which has the potential to change the pupil [48]. No other person - teacher, parent, fellow pupil - can undertake the encounter on another's behalf [49].

Rodger offers no developed theory of convergence or dialogue between the two models of religious education [50]. He is committed to the non-confessional model, but sees links between this and the confessional. In particular, he is open to the possibility of beneficial personal outcomes of religious education, and his recent work suggests a strong interest in transformation, personal development and encounter as outcomes. In this, he differs from Grimmitt and perhaps occupies a position between Grimmitt and Groome.

4. Groome's Ontology [51]

Groome's ontology is an integral part of his work, though perhaps not the most developed [52]. My main source for this is his 1993 unpublished paper What Makes Education Catholic? [53].

In the paper, Groome suggests that Catholic education is distinguished from other education by the same hallmarks that make Catholicism unique. Seven aspects of these characteristics are related to my

category of anthropology.

Two preliminary caveats are necessary in considering Groome's thinking. First, in keeping with his confessional commitment, he is insistent that at least one of the characteristics is "countercultural to much of modern education" (54) and thus may be interpreted as seeing clear limits to any theory of convergence. From his non-confessional stance, Grimmitt seems to mirror this point with his view - based on research with children - that a shared set of anthropological beliefs in a secular plural society was impossible to find (55).

Groome's second caveat acknowledges that the characteristics he identifies are "more the vision than the story of Catholic education" (56), in other words, more theoretical than fully realised. In particular, Catholicism has "often preached and taught a negative anthropology" (57) undermining the positive theory he outlines. This acknowledgement does not undo his theoretical ontological convictions, nor need it obstruct an exploration of the points of similarity betwen his theories and those of Grimmitt and Rodger.

(a) Positive Anthropology

Groome's anthropology is positive. It reflects the "realistic optimism" (58) which he sees in

Catholicism's interpretation of human nature. We are "essentially more good than evil" (59) and capable of responding to God's grace in covenant relationship. Groome seeks support for this positive anthropology from classical sources including scripture and tradition (60), but tends to filter out Augustinian and Calvinist themes on sinfulness. Groome has thus been selective and partial in his treatment of the Christian tradition.

Positive anthropology gives human beings rights and responsibilities. Some of these rights are referred to in, for instance, Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* from which Groome quotes (61). Among other theologians, Kung has stressed a similar positive note, elements of which are supported by Grimmitt (62).

On this positive characteristic of anthropology, Rodger does not seem to travel so far as Groome. In searching for the shared values which could form a theoretical base for education in a plural society, Rodger is cautious and conscious of the difficulties. Yet the few principles he does identify as allowing general agreement are positive: respect for persons, truth-telling (63), love of truth, and the obligation and ability to pursue it (64).

When discussing stances for living in a secular

context, Rodger identifies two elements in a stance and describes them in terms which are necessarily positive:

> "(a) a sense of the kind of universe we live in and of the relationships of human beings to it
>
> (b) an openness of spirit to be guided by that sense of things in all one's living" (65).

He also sees, with pleasure, the commonality between Carl Rogers' vision of a fully functioning human being, Jesus' goal that people might have life to the full, and Irenaus' thought that the glory of God is a human being fully alive (66). Therefore although he does not develop it, Rodger may be said to share a positive anthropology with Groome, and to derive it from the same mixture of Christian and post-Christian sources.

It has already been seen how Grimmitt is sceptical of general anthropological statements in a secular plural society. However, his critical view of Skinner's behaviourism implies a positive anthropology (67). Elsewhere, he identifies some "givens" in the human condition: that we struggle for meaning (68), that we commit ourselves, live with uncertainty, value freedom, interdependence and responsibility, and participate in shaping our own selves (69), that we value order, purpose and meaning, human life and human beings, and spirituality (70). These are positive factors.

On Groome's first characteristic of Catholic anthropology, partial though it might be in the Catholic tradition, there is some measure of agreement from non-confessional thinkers; most non-confessional theorists are inhibited from full agreement by religious and moral pluralism [71]. Even this inhibition, however, is not universal [72].

(b) Sacramentality

For Groome, a second Catholic characteristic having anthropological significance is that of sacramentality. A sacramental consciousness which is able to "see the beyond in the midst" and to "realise that every life-question is eventually a religious one" [73] naturally assumes that human beings have an openness to mystery.

The human being as open to mystery is a theme common to thinkers within and outwith religion, but not explicitly dealt with by Grimmitt and Rodger. Among non-confessional thinkers outwith any formal religious tradition, however, several have stressed the theme of the human openness to mystery. I would suggest that it can be seen in two major thinkers, Heidegger and Jung, to whose work I return as a source for the new model in chapter 6, as well as several lesser figures.

Heidegger represents mystery as a question which strikes at the heart [74]. In the light of this question, human greatness is balanced with human insignificance, which he describes at times with poetic tenderness:

> "Consider the earth within the endless darkness of space in the universe. By way of comparison it is a tiny grain of sand; between it and the next grain of its own size there extends a mile or more of emptiness. On the surface of this grain of sand there lives a crawling, bewildered swarm of supposedly intelligent animals, who for a moment have discovered knowledge" [75].

There is, here, a hint of Psalm 8:4. Heidegger's openness to the transcendent is clear when he speaks of the "leap" of asking the question, a leap which leaves behind certainty [76] which inquires into the *extra*ordinary [77] and which involves looking at a "transcendental horizon" [78]. There is mystery in humanity, but it is expressed in an existentialist framework:

> Only as a questioning, historical being does man come to himself" [79].

The confessional tradition might be tempted to leap upon Heidegger's mystery and claim it as consistent with Groome's sacramentality [80]. Heidegger's existential and materialist belief-system prevents any such claim from being fully taken up.

Jungian thought represents another major non-confessional insight into human openness to mystery. Jung's philosophy accepts the idea of God, the wholly other, in the human midst [81], and makes human consciousness a vessel - one could almost say, with Groome, a sacrament - of this mystery:

> "Our consciousness does not create itself - it wells up from unknown depths" [82].

Jung's practice led him to a belief about human beings as meaning-makers:

> "Among all my patients in the second half of life...there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life" [83].

Knitting together his insights from practice and his philosophy of religion, he tended to diagnose the human condition in terms which are redolent of both spirituality and clinical work:

> "... meaninglessness inhibits fullness of life and is therefore equivalent to illness" [84]

and to explain human existence as a seeking, making and remaking of meaning eventually found in the numinous [85].

If Jung can be understood as believing that human beings are naturally oriented towards a search for God, his view converges with traditional and modern Catholic

theology. Rahner, from a very different starting point, states that "as a result of God's universal salvific will,... every human being... is always potentially a believer" (86). Fowler, whose work I discuss in chapter 1 as part of the context for religious education, stands midway between religion and the human sciences, and asserts, with both, that faith (in a broad sense of the word) is a human universal (87).

Openness to mystery is explored in phenomenological terms by Rudolf Otto (88) and in experiential terms by the religious experience tradition in Britain (89), and in some branches of psychology (90). Rodger notes the wide-scale and re-emerging interest in spirituality and interprets it as anthropologically significant:

> "Try as we will, humanity finds it impossible to shake off the insistent need for meaning, value and purpose in life... spirituality is a fundamentally *human* characteristic" (91).

Spirituality is not other-worldly, but - like sacramentality, with its incarnational emphasis - relates to "the way we are in the world" (92). Rodger is wary of definitions (93), but offers a three-fold view of spirituality as awareness, response in action, and way of life, making links with the SCCORE focus on meaning, value and purpose (94).

Rodger's attempt to plumb the sources of non-confessional, and especially psychological thinking, to discover a way of seeing human spirituality, goes a significant distance in matching Groome's category of sacramentality, especially in that it gives us a clear sense of a spirituality which is part of reality, not an escape from it.

Grimmitt's thinking has no category of sacramentality or mystery. The nearest he comes to opening such a category in his own thinking is in his critique of developmental theories. He asks: what place for serendipity [95] and transcendence, in the schemes of the developmentalists? An implication of this critique is that Grimmitt recognises, to some extent, a less predictable dimension to human nature [96]. He also discusses research indicating a range of "substantive religious categories" which he believes lie embedded in the structure of the mind and, therefore, actually exist as a dimension to human existence. The categories include The Sacred, Soul, Discipleship, Revelation and Worship [97]. None of this, however, amounts to a substantial acknowledgement of a sacramental anthropology.

If Grimmitt seems not to recognise mystery or sacramentality explicitly, one other non-confessionalist has less inhibition:

> "True selfhood can only be attained when man learns to live trustfully in awareness of the mystery. It would seem to follow that this dimension of mystery cannot be ignored when we plan an educational curriculum" (98).

On Groome's second characteristic, we find profound agreement in philosophers outwith formal religion, but only limited agreement from non-confessional religious educators.

(c) Human Nature in Community

The communal nature of human existence is identified by Groome as a feature contributing to ontology. Catholicism holds that "we find our identity and true selves in relationship with others" (99). For Groome, this relating emphasises both the social and ecclesial. Social emphasis means a concentration on the social teaching of the church, in particular a commitment to liberation and justice. Groome's liberationist stance is evident here. Ecclesial emphasis means that Roman Catholic schools operate not in isolation but in partnership with the faith community(ies) of their context (100). Matching this in the secular domain, we find that the process of a school-community approach to moral education, advanced by John Wilson, uses the context of a supportive home and school community where views are respected and pupils are encouraged to follow moral points through

into action [101] and also the model of a "just community" approach to moral education, inspired by Kohlberg's developmental theory of moral reasoning and tried in a few schools in the U.S.A. [102]. It may be argued that both of these secular models relied on a supportive "secular parish" of shared values and belonging corresponding to Groome's ecclesial emphasis and matching his communal anthropology. But the extent to which such a neo-parish support exists in all social classes and ideologies of western countries remains unproven.

The point about the importance of shared values has been avidly made by politicians on the British right, for whom "schools must not be value-free zones" and who call for a school curriculum promoting - note the order - "spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils" [103]. This note is echoed by the work of the government's curriculum agency for England [104]. Outside politics, others have more wisely stated that schools not only must not be, but - more to the point - are not capable of being value free zones [105]. To the extent that recent public policy and documentation on values has been the product of the political right, it must be treated as a partial, partisan and limited contribution to visions of community [106].

In Rodger's thinking, human community or society provides both shared assumptions and also variety of outlook on moral matters, and both the consensus and the variety are necessary (107). Human society can afford a degree of variety in beliefs, values and behaviour, so long as control and conformity are retained on a limited range of issues, which he does not specify (108).

Like Groome, Rodger recognises the relevance of human community to the anthropological question, but unlike Groome he addresses it from a pluralist direction, with no developed explanation of ecclesial communities. He makes a further point which Groome leaves out. Human communities in the western world, valuing both variety and conformity are, therefore, ambiguous about education. They want to have both an open society with liberal education, and also a transmissive system which retains certain basic values. This ambivalence, Rodger believes, is found not only in society as a whole but also in every individual working in education (109).

If this point is accepted, it could be developed with the reflection that there is a plurality of intention among educators, even those who are at the heart of the confessional system.

In Grimmitt's thinking, human beings as meaning makers must operate not only individually, but also collectively, or socially, so that "moral, religious and spiritual meaning... forms part of the cultural history into which each person is born" (110). Further, human beings are shaped by their surrounding myths, values, belief systems and experiences, to become the people they are. Even those who live "in the cracks" between belief systems are shaped by that very ambiguity (111). Grimmitt therefore has a corresponding category to Groome's community characteristic.

Non-confessional theory, looking to its plural and secular context, is therefore able to provide an equivalent to Groome's anthropological category of community, and in some ways goes further; but this equivalent is subject to political pressures which weaken its constancy and its liberative potential.

(d) Rationality

Groome's next characteristic of Catholicism is its rationality. While this will relate mainly to his approach to theology and religious studies, discussed below, any claim to a rational theology assumes rational human beings. Groome indicates how Catholicism sees reason as a gift of God, helping human beings (112).

Rationality as a human quality is very widely agreed among secular thinkers. Human beings may be said to have, at the very least, a rational thoughtfulness which is distinctive, perhaps unique. For some, this very rationality is a reason to have religion in the curriculum (113). Liberal secular education is happy with a rational anthropology (114). Grimmitt offers the philosophical aspect of the self as "the unifying principle which brings the other selves into a more or less harmonious relation with each other" (115).

But Catholic anthropology usually wishes to move from rationality to divine capability, going where much secular thought cannot follow. Even though there has been some enlightenment-based criticism of pure rationality, Groome still rejects Cartesian rationality as disconnected (116).

In some secular anthropologies, therefore, we see an agreement with Catholicism about rationality, and at least some willingness to go beyond it.

(e) Personhood

For Groome, personhood is "an ontological concern" (117). Roman Catholic education must intend not only to inform, but also to form and transform its participants in their very being (118). Any fitting anthropology

must be holistic. Later, he argues that this holistic unity must influence epistemology also. It is this concern which Groome believes to be at variance with modern western approaches.

Nevertheless, non-confessional approaches to moral education can explicitly embrace the aim of changing people. Rodger's review of values education approaches suggests a few secular attempts at transformative education (119). Rodger, the non-confessionalist, clearly believes in a moral education which addresses and affects the inner being of a person in a holistic sense (120); similar ontological aims are legitimate for religious education (121). Recently Rodger develops his idea of the whole person being present and involved in the process (122). Clearly he not only shares Groome's feeling that valid religious and moral education transforms its participants, but also sees the learner in anthropological terms as an ontological unity, as Groome does.

Grimmitt concedes similar points but with more caution and less enthusiasm. He accepts that all education is transformative (123) implying that education, including religious education, will have some personal or even behavioural outcome. He illustrates how this personal outcome works in religious education through ultimate questions (124).

Religious education as a study of religions also contributes, he argues, to the understanding of self [125]. Furthermore, pupils should "evaluate their understanding of self in religious terms" [126]. For Grimmitt, these personal, ontological challenges and changes are legitimate and desirable outcomes of religious education; but he rarely welcomes them and more often lets them into his system because he feels they are logically inescapable.

To varying extents, Rodger and Grimmitt support the implications of Groome's holistic personhood as a characteristic of anthropology.

(f) Concern for Justice and Inclusiveness

The last two characteristics of Catholicism which Groome offers in his ontological work are taken together. They are not restricted to Catholicism and may be equally held by secular educationalists.

All human beings - and therefore all students - are to be treated with dignity and should also be taught to respect the human rights of all [127]. Inclusiveness affirms each person's worth and engages all their gifts [128]. These values are upheld by Rodger in the non-confessional context [129].

(g) Postscript

Groome argues that Roman Catholic education, if guided by the anthropological lodestars identified above, will treat its students and other participants with respect. It will form its students in concern for human well-being and in a conviction that life is significant and worth while (130). It will encourage active learning and discourage ladling out predigested knowledge to passive recipients (131). It will encourage critical reflection and questioning and discourage conformity or quietism in the face of oppressive attitudes or systems (132). These features contribute to the liberative potential of education.

While it has been possible to identify corresponding features of anthropology by developing and interpreting arguments from several sources, one significant difference must be acknowledged. Groome has a more detailed ontology than Grimmitt or Rodger, characterised by natural theology's sense of continuity between nature and the divine; Grimmitt and Rodger, on the other hand, have less developed anthropologies, and I have relied on a several separate themes in their work in order to draw out and interpret their anthropological assumptions. Both thinkers feel more comfortable with general statements about religion and morality being part of human experience (133) and with

general or systematised theories of human growth in religion and morality [134]. There is some awareness in the non-confessional tradition of the limitations of such statements [135], but there is no consensus on how to move beyond them.

Rodger explains his caution in terms of the linguistic difficulties in expressing shared truths about humanity:

> "We are like people trying to speak in a foreign language about experiences we have ignored or lost touch with. Even the language (and, for some, **particularly** the language) in which our culture once was able to speak of spiritual aspects of experience is a barrier to understanding for many" [136].

Rodger's point is not new, but it can be extended from spirituality to the whole range of utterances about human nature. The need for, and difficulty involved in, a shared language for anthropology, are both plain. Rodger's only answer is "the emergence of a language which communicates because it is understood from inside the experiences in which it is rooted" [137]. Whether a language at once so personal and so universal can ever emerge is a moot point.

The discussion of anthropology has revealed that on all seven of Groome's characteristics of a Catholic anthropology, a variety of non-confessional theorists can be interpreted similarly. The major insights of

non-confessional thinking, however, are usually expressed in generalities. The difficulty presented by Rodger is real, but does not negate the underlying harmony between the two traditions. Here we have a considerable measure of convergence in anthropological thinking.

5. Groome's Epistemology

Epistemology may be described as the theory of valid knowledge [138], asking questions such as: how is knowledge possible? What form does knowledge take? As applied to religion, epistemology asks: is religious knowledge possible? If so, how? What does it consist of? Is it verifiable and expressible? Questions of logic and language are involved in the discussion.

In this section, Groome's epistemology is discussed and placed alongside a variety of non-confessional sources. Neither Grimmitt nor Rodger offer a systematic epistemological position, although both give indications.

Groome's epistemology forms a more dominant aspect of his theoretical work than his ontology, but given his view of conation as personal knowledge, the two categories flow together in his thought.

According to Groome, the religious educator should

aim for conation. Conation is a holistic definition of knowledge, involving cognitive, affective and volitional/behaviourial outcomes (139). Groome traces the roots of conation back to the Classical period, and to Spinoza (140). He then criticises the dominant epistemological tradition of the west as overwhelmingly and destructively cognitivist (141), but also uses it to salvage the more holistic insights (142).

Two desirable characteristics of knowledge emerge from Groome's assessment. The first is that knowledge, defined as conation, should engage the learner's mind, affections and will - sometimes expressed as head, heart and hand - as a pedagogical unity, avoiding the cognitivist excesses of the western tradition. We may define this characteristic as balance (143). The second characteristic follows on from the first: conation in religion should engage the whole person to such an extent that epistemology and anthropology become "epistemic ontology" (144), the distinction between them fading to nothing (145). I describe this characteristic as unity. Balance and unity, then, form two central characteristics of Groome's epistemology. My next task is an evaluation of the extent to which these characteristics can be found elsewhere.

(a) Balance and Unity in Grimmitt and Rodger

Groome's critique of the western epistemological

tradition finds an echo in Grimmitt. He focuses particularly on the empirical tradition, tracing it from Plato, Kant and Hegel. He holds this tradition responsible for the view that we live in a world where knowledge amounts to what is quantifiable, objective, or provable (146).

Rodger also has criticisms of the western model of knowledge. He warns that society has exclusively elevated a paradigm of knowledge based on objectivity and rationality, and argues logically that this distortion will alienate learners from awareness of their own experience (147). For him, the ideal of objectivity and the separation of pure knowledge from personal application is not adequate (148). He recommends that understanding should be involved in the encounter with religions, but must not rule the encounter nor prevent pupils from asking their own questions of the content (149). To ensure that a personal form of knowledge is taught, he urges religious education to build a coalition with other subjects at the personal end of the curricular spectrum, such as moral education and personal and social development (150). To support his belief, Rodger makes use of what he sees as one positive facet of the western tradition, the balance of *sophia* with *phronesis* (metaphysics with practical wisdom) in the tradition of

the classical philosophers (151). Rodger's critical selection of what he sees as helpful aspects of the epistemological tradition is similar in method to Groome's. Rodger uses *sophia* and *phronesis* to support his belief that religious education also has twin foci, the human search as expressed in the religions and other stances for living, and the pupil's own search for meaning, value and purpose.

Grimmitt's critique of phenomenology focuses particularly on its descriptive role. He warns of the danger that pupils may rarely move beyond a descriptive level into questioning or examining their own response (152).

This warning might be developed with a critique of textbooks and videos which take an excessively descriptive approach. Practitioners of a faith are described in print, or caught on film, going through ritual duties. Although there is explanation of the meanings, there is little evidence of a mature ownership of faith or of any interest in challenging or dialoging with the reader/viewer. It is as if the practitioner lives faith in terms of duty and habit, operating in Fowler terms at Stage 2 or 3. Such presentations of faith are common. They tend to miss out on opportunities to develop the pupil's own response and personal search; they may also encourage

pupils passively to remain at relatively immature psychodynamic stages of their own faith.

Grimmitt's rationale includes personal response which will sometimes be "transformational" (153). At other times, it will include challenging cultural assumptions and bringing about a change in consciousness (154). Logically, such an approach must include volitional as well as cognitive and affective goals. Grimmitt therefore works with an implied epistemology close to Groome's in its balance of head, heart and hand.

Rodger harmonises precisely with the balanced epistemology argument, expressing it in terms of relinquishing neither scientific understanding nor the capacity to set it aside for the purpose of mysterious encounters with the world (155). He calls for a vision of religious education which encourages commitment from pupils, not in a narrow confessional sense, but in a whole-person sense which is free of content specification. Pupils should work out their commitment on three levels (156).

The first level is commitment to believing what commends itself to them as true. Rodger matches this commitment to the SCCORE category of meaning (157). It is further argued here that this commitment corresponds to Groome's cognitive element in conation. This is so

because beliefs furnish the mind with a patterned sense of meaning, and they involve acceptance of propositions which are usually expressed, discussed and evaluated within the pupil's cognitive domain. This will lead in turn to the adopting of attitudes and feelings.

The second level is commitment to pursuing what commends itself to them as worthy. Rodger matches this commitment to the SCCORE category of value [158]. It is further argued here that this commitment corresponds to Groome's affective element in conation, which he sometimes calls desiring. Pursuing or valuing that which is worthy is an attitudinal or affective outcome related to desiring the good and challenging, developing and using the pupil's affective domain. It will lead in turn to the area of action.

Rodger's third level is commitment to doing what commends itself to be right. Rodger matches this commitment to the SCCORE category of purpose [159]. It is further argued here that this commitment corresponds to Groome's volitional or behavioural element in conation. Action follows on from beliefs and attitudes, forming a part of the whole-person approach to knowledge.

Two observations may be made. First, I would qualify Rodger's attachment of facets of commitment to

meaning, value and purpose, and my own attachment to cognitive, affective and volitional. These words are useful as symbols; but they should not be taken to indicate a belief that, for instance, commitment to truth happens only through a quest for meaning and is solely cognitive. It may be argued that its main focus lies here, but other domains are also related. Second, I notice a cyclical pattern in Rodger's commitment. Beliefs, desires and actions flow cyclically and this has been developed by other educationalists (160).

By arguing for a whole-pupil approach to commitment, Rodger adopts a balanced epistemology which is indistinguishable from Groome's. Furthermore, Groome's dialogical, staged approach of shared praxis is gently echoed in Rodger's belief that a long-term aim of religious education is to "provoke and promote" the pupil's "personal appraisal, evaluation and response" to what is learned, in dialogue all the time with the pupil's own search for "meaning, value and purpose" (161). Elsewhere, Rodger develops his view of the need for a balanced definition of knowledge when he speaks of moral education. Any approach which emphasises thinking or feeling alone is inadequate: balance, and even eclecticism, are preferable. (162).

In so far as Grimmitt agrees with Groome's concern for unity, he only does so in reverse, as it were, his

eyes firmly fixed on the phenomenological position from which he wishes to back away. Negatively speaking, therefore, and by implication, Grimmitt's critique of bracketing out as being in direct conflict with child-centred education [163] may be said to bring him some way towards Groome.

Rodger makes, but does not develop, a more explicit plea for holistic, united approaches to learning. Discussing values education, he underlines the importance not only of thinking, feeling or doing in isolation, but also the importance of what the person <u>is</u> [164]. Implicit here is an interest in the unity of epistemological principles with human identity.

Both authors share Groome's epistemological critique; neither expresses it as systematically, though Rodger goes into more detail than Grimmitt. Both call for an epistemology which balances the human faculties, and both can be interpreted as sympathetic to an epistemic ontology.

It is interesting to note in passing that if Groome's conation is defined as something which changes the learner, a corollary might be that it should also change the teacher. While the former point is attested to by Groome, Grimmitt and Rodger, the latter is not mentioned by any of them.

(b) Balance and Unity in Phenomenological Sources

I argued in chapter 2 that phenomenology, as a tradition, is divided, with some of its significant voices moderating the claims of a scientific epistemology.

In his defence of phenomenology, Smart explains and answers the criticism that understanding is impossible without experience. He takes as an example the point made that:

> "you cannot understand the meaning of Christology without experiencing the risen Christ" (165).

His response is to identify the voices in which different epistemologies speak. The believer expressing faith speaks in the expressive voice; the phenomenologist, describing faith, uses indirect speech (*"oratio obliqua"*) or the descriptive voice. Neither of these will do, argues Smart; half-way between them lies "evocative speech", which neither embraces, nor merely reports religion, but sympathetically portrays it (166). Implicit in Smart's distinction is a retreat from full-blown scientific epistemology to a position which he considers more appropriate.

Chris Arthur's educational pilgrim, Cipher, encounters the phenomenological tradition as offering

"as non-secondhand an insight as it is possible to achieve" into a religious outlook (167). This curiously contorted sentence indicates Arthur's discomfort. If Cipher is able to enter religion inwardly, he must then "escape" to communicate it outwardly. This double journey of "passing over" and "coming back" is not without its criticisms, but is defended by Arthur (168) and by Dunne (169). Even while Arthur defends the possibility of passing over, he concedes that its degree of success must be variable (170) and that Cipher's task in communicating the ineffable may sometimes be most appropriately carried out by being silent (171). Silence in the face of the ineffable amounts to abandonment of the attempt to know religion scientifically and therefore an acceptance of the need for balance. Balanced epistemology is also emphasised as bringing harmony and spiritual maturity (172).

A more powerful defence of a balanced and united epistemology comes from Pannikar (173). His interest in dialogue leads him to an engagement of the whole person, who "listens and observes, but... also speaks, corrects and is corrected" because there is no "naked" or "pure" belief separate from the person who believes (174).

These voices carry weight in phenomenology, but do not speak for the entire tradition.

(c) Balance and Unity in Post-Christian Sources

Typically, Groome is not content with the classical and Christian traditions as sources for his model; he lends his epistemology a convergent character by supporting it with post-Christian thought (175). It is, therefore, unsurprising to find his quest for a holistic religious epistemology is shared by religious educators rooted in non-confessionalism.

At the very least, we can see wide agreement with Groome's epistemological critique. For Carl Rogers, it is the personal element in knowledge which brings about change (176). Piaget believed that classical epistemologies concentrated on bodies of knowledge (177), and wished instead to define knowledge as a process of growth (178). He defined this growth as not only cognitive but affective (179). It is, perhaps, an indicator of the persistent hold of cognitivism that Piaget is famous chiefly for his work on cognitive development.

But lest religious epistemology take flight from the cognitive altogether, Santoni warns of the dangers of such a reaction. Subjective experience, he argues, is not entitled to the label of "empirical knowledge" unless it can be amenable to public procedures of testing (180). This raises an interesting set of

problems, not least with the assessment of personal search areas of religious education.

Contemporary comment on the liberal enlightened tradition reveals unhappiness with its epistemological methods and assumptions, particularly procedural doubt (181), the tendency to reductionism (182) and the emphasis on sense-experience (183).

Polanyi's work is distinctive for its enquiry into the nature of scientific knowledge. He comes at the problem of balance from another direction but with concerns similar to Groome's. He begins by rejecting the ideal of scientific detachment as it exercises a "destructive influence" and "falsifies our whole outlook far beyond the domain of science" (184). Instead, he calls on us to "credit ourselves with much wider cognitive powers" (185). He redefines epistemology as personal knowledge, seeing truth statements as personal and recommending they be prefaced with a "symbol determining the modality of the sentence" (186). This would be an indication that the speaker is speaking - or asserting - in a certain tone of voice, attuned to dialogue.

Heidegger's thought promotes a form of epistemic ontology; he took authentic being and invested its authenticity with qualities of consciousness such as alienation, thrownness, *angst* and dread. Only being

which is characterised by such emotions, argued Heidegger, would awaken us to true knowing or consciousness. Realities such as violence, power and being were closely related to the "passion of knowledge" (187).

For one thinker, the question of knowing in religion can only be properly approached if we accept that "the question of knowing is inseparable from the question of being" (188).

New epistemological directions are contributed by several efforts to restate the relationship between scientific and personal knowledge. Polanyi points to ethics as an essential factor. For him, value judgements are ubiquitous, making all knowledge and all science ethically based (189); and any science, such as behaviourism, which forgets this, becomes impaired or corrupted (190). Another attempt is found in Heidegger. Caputo interprets Heidegger as asserting that scientific thinking needs a "productive logic" which sees further ahead than the detail of disciplines, giving them a framework of concepts. Without the productive logic, a science is "blind and perverted from its ownmost aim" (191).

Elucidating the structure of religious knowledge has been one of the central tasks of the philosophy of

religion [192]. Philosophy of religion has tended to focus the debate on the verifiability of religious experiences, often concluding that experiences are so subjective that religious ways of knowing must be "introspective and subjective" also [193]. For some, this rules out the possibility of religious knowledge [194]. Ayer's positivism led him to believe that expression of religious beliefs was likewise illegitimate, possessing no literal significance and therefore neither valid nor invalid [195].

Schrag used phenomenological methods to describe knowledge in what was, for him, its fullest sense. His data for this description simply consisted of "consciousness, understood in its broadest sense" [196]. He suggested that consciousness included non-cognitive modes such as the sensual, moral, and aesthetic, and that neglect of these modes would falsify data and thus undermine knowledge [197]. Since some delineation of modes is necessary, any fundamental unity of the modes is "problematic" [198]. The moral mode is to do with consciousness of interacting with others, and borrows ideas from Buber and Heidegger [199].

The least that can be concluded is that post-Christian sources frequently discuss the problem of knowledge, and have done so in ways which can sometimes

recognise the reality of religious knowledge. The concern for balance and unity is also visible.

(d) Conclusion on Epistemology

Groome's epistemology identifies balance and unity with being as two essential characteristics of conation. These characteristics are either supported, or else matched by corresponding categories, within and beyond the religious context and in a range of academic disciplines. The epistemological critique is shared by Grimmitt, Rodger, Smart, Arthur, Pannikar, Rogers, Polanyi, Piaget and Arblaster. Balance is supported by Piaget, Polanyi and both Grimmitt and Rodger. Unity is supported by Schrag, Heidegger, Polanyi, Rodger, and (partially) Grimmitt. Therefore, Groome's epistemology of religious education may be said to be applicable outwith the confessional sector, because the wider world appears to have sufficient agreement with his model of knowledge.

6. Groome's Approach to Religion

(a) Groome's Hermeneutics

Groome's work includes guidelines for encountering the "text" of a living faith tradition, and these form the basis of my exploration of his approach to religion. Nine hermeneutical criteria are provided,

with the intention to ensure that the "text" (200) of the living faith tradition is truly encountered (201).

His entire hermeneutic approach rests on the assumption that Christian faith has a profound harmony of purpose with education (202). My discussion exposes how, at times, this belief is hard to justify.

In considering the guidelines, I use Groome's words, except that where he refers specifically to the Christian faith, I refer to a faith tradition or simply a tradition. In using this slightly revised terminology on the guidelines, I am testing the extent of their applicability to the study of another world faith in a non-confessional context.

(i) The first criterion for hermeneutics is the reign of God, a "metacriterion" overarching the entire endeavour of accessing the tradition (203). Can such a priority be translated into non-confessional contexts where Christian commitment is not shared by participants, and where the tradition accessed may be Sikhism, Islam or Buddhism ? On the face of it, definitely not. The reign of God is an exclusively Christian concept associated with the belief in Jesus as Christ, Lord, King and Son of Man.

However, if the reign of God is defined in terms of its social and moral values, the situation is

changed. Groome's liberationist stance means that he clearly defines the reign of God in terms of values such as peace, justice, love, freedom, wholeness and fullness of life, and the well-being of creation (204). Elsewhere, he defines Christian religious education as a political activity (205). Political values such as his translate into, and are shared widely by, secular movements against war, racism, sexism, political oppression, abuse of children, and environmental devastation, and other social ills. These values are also shared by many religions, especially Sikhism and Buddhism.

Enlightenment-based secular approaches to the achievement of progressive goals in society, whether based on liberal optimism and rationality, Marxist inevitability, or simple unphilosophical human concern, will usually bear the mark of their enlightenment ancestry in the form of a conviction that if human beings act together for a good cause, good will come. The most notable educational exemplar of this belief is Paulo Freire. His preferred pedagogy envisages a secular equivalent to the reign of God: a liberation achieved through posing problems in dialogue (206). Those involved in progressive movements may, therefore, be said to share the values and the approach of a Christian seeking the reign of God.

Such an argument, however, is open to attack as an attempt by Christians to colonise what is often consciously a post-Christian commitment. In any case, few Christians would accept a definition of the reign of God solely in terms of its values and shorn of any dogmatic content relating to Christ. While process theology and some political theologies have attempted to re-introduce a transcendent God as a positive irruption of the future (207), these attempts are as yet too problematic to be accepted either by secular thinkers or by traditional theologians.

Therefore, while secular education shares and indeed carries forward many of the values identified by Groome as being part of the reign of God, it cannot claim any equivalent overarching metacriterion of corresponding size and significance.

(ii) Religious educators are to remember the interests and perspectives they bring to every text from their own life (208). The educator must remember the "tinted lenses" she wears, both as an individual and as part of a culture or society, and must be consciously critical of them.

There is clear evidence that the phenomenological tradition is aware of this, even if it has some difficulties putting into practice. Ninian Smart writes of a possibility of "distancing oneself from one's own

position" (209). Elsewhere, writing Christian theology, he advocates an approach which would protect Christian phenomena from culturally-bound evaluative processes (210). Couliano, writing of Eliade's approach, is optimistic that religious learners can overcome their own assumptions in search of understanding (211). Taking their inspiration from the doctrine of *epoche*, non-confessionalists will have no difficulty in agreeing with this criterion.

(iii) Religious educators are to remember what they bring to the text of the tradition from the stories and visions of participants (212). This involves being conscious of the age-level, background, and experiences of the participants.

Non-confessional religious education, influenced by its secular pedigree, is highly conscious of this criterion - perhaps sometimes more so than confessional religious education. The importance of respecting the pupil's life-experience in the learning process is emphasised by Bastide:

> "The teacher's role is not to give answers because there are no answers which are universally agreed. It is rather to help the children to move along in the process of finding their own meaning" (213).

Kincaid's anecdote on the pupil learning Hinduism also bears this out (214). Grimmitt much prefers to

structure religious education material by reference to the needs and interests of the pupil, rather than by reference to the inner logic of the subject (215). Thus there is ample testimony to non-confessional religious education's consciousness of the stories and visions of participants. Groome's third criterion is substantially met.

(iv) The educator employs a "hermeneutic of retrieval" to reclaim and make accessible the truths symbolically mediated in the tradition (216). The phrase "hermeneutic of retrieval" indicates a desire to rediscover and affirm what are the life-giving truths and values within the tradition. This criterion is discussed with the next.

(v) The educator employs a "hermeneutic of suspicion" to uncover mystifications and distortions in the dominant interpretation of the tradition, and to reclaim its "dangerous memories" (217). Since his vision of religious education is directed toward the goal of the freedom of the reign of God, he wishes to encourage a critical approach to religion which, far from unquestioningly accepting all of the tradition, will look beyond absolutisations, triumphalisms, and human errors, into the undiscovered heart of the religion, dangerous because subversive of cultural and theological norms (218).

The fourth and fifth criteria represent a profound and challenging double approach to religion which might at first seem unique to the confessional context. Yet these criteria correspond to much good non-confessional practice. Essentially, Groome is calling for an approach to religion which challenges and transcends its image in order to touch its reality. Attitudes such as understanding, toleration and respect are indispensable to this, and are accepted as aims. (219). A recurrent theme in Owen Cole's work is the urgent need to challenge and cut away stereotypical images of the religions (220). Smith draws our attention to this issue particularly in relation to Islam, which he describes as "hopelessly and systematically and stubbornly misunderstood" by the west (221). He stresses positive aspects of Islamic social teaching (222) and Sufism (223). Arguably he is employing a hermeneutic of retrieval of Islam's best aspects, and of suspicion towards its stereotypes. This corresponds to, and fulfils, Groome's call for an approach of challenging and going beyond the images a religion presents.

Rodger's approach challenges and questions the monolithic image of Christianity, and calls for a recognition of its plural or diverse nature as no less important and striking than its unity (224).

Groome intends the fourth and fifth criteria to introduce a radical, critical approach to a tradition. I have shown how some non-confessionalists grasp some aspects of the approach; but I suspect that what is needed here is a very sure, instinctive feel for the heart of a faith. Such confidence comes through nurture and is much less easily attained in the study of different faiths. These hermeneutics, then, present a difficulty when transferred to non-confessionalism.

(vi) The educator employs a "hermeneutic of creative commitment" to construct more adequate understandings of the tradition, and to envision more faithful ways of living it with personal and social transformation (225). This commitment harmonises with Groome's holistic definition of knowledge as including volitional goals, oriented toward liberating action.

On the face of it, this type of commitment cannot be sought in a non-confessional classroom; and any attempts by teachers in this context to elicit such responses from pupils have usually been dismissed as socialisation or indoctrination (226). Yet Grimmitt accepts that all education has a socialising role, that it "does things to people" and shapes them (227); and in his discussion of the objective phenomenological approach, he allows for an understanding of religious

experience which will be based on empathy (228). But this extension of a phenomenological approach into the domain of the affective and experiential is not, in Grimmitt's view or mine, the equivalent of envisioning more faithful ways of living a tradition. Grimmitt appears to allow a measure of personal and social transformation, and certainly encourages understanding, but his theoretical approach cannot bear any interpretation along the lines of encouraging pupils to live a faith. Here we encounter a clear obstacle to convergence between approaches.

However, non-confessional theory does not present a united front on this point. The authors of the Westhill project, discussing the critique of religious education as possibly undermining the faith commitment of children who are nurtured at home, reply thus:

> "Far from undermining children's commitments, R.E. should help them to think more clearly and deeply about them" (229).

There is a certain naive optimism to this statement, which, even if it were true, falls short of a commitment to envisioning ways of living a faith. Groome's sixth hermeneutical criterion begins to take on the appearance of an obstacle to convergence.

The Scottish theoretical context goes some way to reducing this obstacle, if not removing it. The non-

confessional understanding of religious education places the subject within the context of the pupil's own search, and argues strongly that the pupil is not only learning about religion, but also learning from it (230). Personal responsiveness to a tradition is seen as legitimate; although there may not be much difference between this and Groome's phrase "envisioning ways of living a tradition faithfully", the latter wording would be likely to make non-confessionalists feel uncomfortable. Therefore there is still a gap, perhaps only a semantic and cultural one, but real nonetheless.

(vii) Every authentic explanation of a particular text is in continuity with and appropriate to the constitutive truths and values of the whole tradition (231). This is equivalent to saying that the teacher must present particular phenomena in a way which does justice to the faith tradition studied. This criterion is a hallmark of phenomenology. For instance, Smart's definition of his approach deals not only with appearances of a faith, but with "how it actually is" (232). There would seem to be no contradiction with Groome.

(viii) An authentic explanation of a particular text promotes personal and social consequences creative of God's reign (233). This echoes the overarching

priority of the first criterion, and imposes the same restrictions on its applicability to non-confessional endeavour.

(ix) Community is a guideline in that authentic explanation of a particular expression of the tradition is informed by the understanding of "the church" and is adequate to the praxis of this community of participants (234). In the context of Christian religious education, this hermeneutical criterion takes on pastoral value as a mechanism for placing any new insights or proposals for action into the context of the needs of the local faith-community (235).

In the context of non-confessional education, this could be a restrictive and non-applicable factor. But Groome's emphasis, in his carefully worded criterion, on appropriateness to the local community's understanding of itself is perhaps transferable to local communities where self-understanding in a wholly secular sense remains an important ingredient in the understanding of taught content. Grimmitt quotes and supports Hardy's argument that the community of religions exists both outside the classroom and inside it, and that this should be used for making the encounter with religions more real under the sponsorship of an empathetic teacher (236). Reference to the local community context, when planning work on

world religions, is advised by the Scottish non-confessional guidelines (237).

On this criterion, partial rapprochement is possible, but Groome's full meaning probably exceeds that of non-confessional theorists on this point.

(b) Alex Rodger

Rodger has remained largely silent during the discussion of Groome's approach to religion. His major contribution is to ask whether Christianity can accept the approach of teaching Christianity as one religion among others (238).

The question is dealt with in two ways. First, can a Christian participate in this ? Rodger believes so, on the grounds that it is a Gospel approach, based on treating others as one would wish to be treated:

> "Thus Christians witness to their faith as much by their voluntary restraint in the classroom as by their open proclamation" (239).

This is an astute and important point, commanding wide support educationally.

A second aspect raised by Rodger is the question of whether there are any non-Christian assumptions built into an objective approach to Christianity - assumptions which might undermine the possibility of committed response (240). Rodger answers this clearly

in the negative. Religious education is neither Christian nor secular: it is both (241). The secular principle of impartiality is an educational application of the Christian golden rule. By implication, therefore, Christians need have no theological objections to an impartial handling of their own tradition in the classroom. Further, Gospel charity exhorts them to this approach, and objective and Christian approaches are not incompatible.

Rodger's argument is important in approaching Groome from non-confessionalism, but for purposes of convergence it suffers from two weaknesses. First, it might not command universal Christian support; second, it contains no vision for a Christian end-point such as the reign of God, held to be so important in Groome's approach.

Groome himself meets Rodger at this point when he states that there is nothing uniquely Christian about his process of religious education (242). It becomes Christian

> "when our reflective activity is in response to the Christian story and vision", and
>
> "when the story and vision are retold and our own stories and visions critiqued in their light" (243).

In other words, what distinguishes Christian religious education is no fundamental philosophy, but merely the content studied and the nature of the intention to be changed when studying it.

The first of these distinguishing features need not detain us, since Christianity is studied widely in non-confessional contexts. The second feature - the intention that learners be critiqued and changed in light of what is learned - has been observed in non-confessional theories ranging from Grimmitt, through Rodger to several other thinkers (244). Since both distinguishing features are observable in non-confessional theory, a convergence of approaches to religion looks feasible.

(c) Conclusion

Of Groome's nine hermeneutical criteria, five are easily applicable in the non-confessional sector. A further three - those relating to the reign of God and the local faith-community - have partial counterparts in non-confessional theory, but the counterparts lack the equivalent weight and significance. One criterion, that of envisioning ways of living a faith, presents a solid obstacle to convergence, although it has been argued that the obstacle is partly reduced by Scottish theoretical emphasis. A complete convergence of approaches to theology and religious studies between

Groome and non-confessional theories is therefore not possible, although considerable common ground clearly exists.

7. Groome's Praxis

The cycle of five pedagogical steps, or movements, known as shared praxis, is a distinctive feature of his work, substantially supported by theoretical insights from within and outwith Christianity. Here I intend to highlight features of the praxis which lean towards or away from convergence.

The entire cycle has learner-centred features. After a brief focusing activity, the first movement consists of naming present action in relation to the topic (245). Critical reflection follows in the second movement (246). Part of the purpose is to release dialogue that was previously repressed. In effect, a communal critical hermeneutic takes place (247). Groome believes that critical reflection in children emerges and can be nurtured from the beginning of concrete operational thinking, that is, from five or six years of age (248).

So far, it could be argued that Groome's praxis is consistent with child-centred learning techniques practised in non-confessional religious education and advocated in non-confessional thinking (249). With

movements three and four, the praxis turns to accessing the story and vision of the Christian community, and working out through dialogue and interpretation what the story and vision means for the participants (250). This may be the most obviously catechetical movement, in the sense that it will usually require some form of content input and this is invariably assumed by Groome to be Christian content. The nature of the content, however, need not be a major difference on its own.

Freedom is another feature of the praxis; it is built into the fourth movement, where working out a response to the tradition may involve affirming it, calling it into question, or moving beyond it (251). Because Groome's underlying ontology (or anthropology) sees participants as free agents, no specified behavioural outcome is looked for; rather participants take ownership of the material presented in movement three, look critically at it, and use in ways which are authentic to them and to their personal and communal vision, all of which is a critical reflection similar to movement two (252).

Groome's dialogue with sources outside Christian theology remains a feature even at the most catechetical moment of the cycle, the step of appropriation or ownership of the tradition in movement four. This is analogous not only to Lonergan's notion

of judgement, but also to Piaget's notion of equilibriation (253). In the 5-14 guidelines, the same idea is to be found: it is implied in the reference to pupils gaining skills in locating, accessing, evaluating and using information (254). Therefore we can say that the process described in Groome's fourth movement is fully consistent, in its internal learning structure, with non-confessional thinking.

Groome's fifth movement is initially seen as an extension of the dialectical hermeneutic of the fourth, until it moves into a decision on future action in the light of all that has gone before (255). In his later work, this movement is developed into a "decision/response for lived Christian faith" (256). What can non-confessionalists make of this ? Ever wary of behavioural outcomes and the charge of indoctrination, they might justly look on the fifth movement with suspicion (257). Since everything leads up to movement five, the whole process might become suspect. A partial answer to this objection lies in Groome's theological priority for freedom, in which decisions for lived Christian faith remain a hope, and are never predetermined as outcomes (258). The fifth movement nevertheless represents a sticking-point for convergence.

8. Conclusions

In this analysis of the work of Groome and others, I have uncovered a number of factors lending themselves to convergence, together with some factors which support divergence.

Anthropology commands very substantial agreement, the only exception being one category on which non-confessional theory travels with Groome some of the way, but not all.

Epistemology is closely linked, in Groome's thinking, to anthropology. Support for this connection, and for the balance and unity it produces, is found in a wide variety of non-confessional theorists.

A complete convergence of approaches to religion between Groome and non-confessional theories is not possible: although considerable common ground clearly exists, Groome's explicit commitment to action towards the reign of God moves beyond non-confessional interests.

The practical outworking of Groome's shared praxis is consistent with Piagetian and child-centred practices up to the fifth and last movement.

From this I conclude that a test of convergence using Groome's model of religious education finds very

substantial levels of common interest and concern in all three categories, but also encounters some obstacles to total convergence.

Digest of Chapter 5

TESTING CONVERGENCE (2): THE PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

Chapter 5

TESTING CONVERGENCE (2): THE PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

> "Catholic and non-denominational schools in Scotland have reached an unprecedented degree of dialogue on R.E., and indeed congruence on some points" [1].

To what extent is this statement, made in 1992, true and verifiable [2]? In this chapter, I assess critically the extent to which convergence is reflected in the practice of the subject in Scotland, by analysing curricular developments and data on Scottish R.E. in the period 1989-1993. From the evidence, I conclude that convergence patterns are significant but not conclusive.

1. Methodology: Gathering and Analysing Evidence of Practical Convergence

This chapter looks first at the evidence for practical convergence. This takes the form of data or developments which suggest that one or both of the models are moving towards the other. Such evidence, which is plentiful, is evaluated for its significance. Certain forms of evidence are discounted as

untrustworthy, and the limits of convergence evidence are discussed, together with the evidence against practical convergence.

My evidence comes from contemporary curricular developments, textbooks, policy documents and H.M. Inspectorate reports. In addition, I have used data from official statistics which can reveal the extent of cooperation on curriculum development and participation in examination courses in Religious Studies.

In order to gain a coherent view of practical developments and the data surrounding them, I use four aspects of Scottish R.E provision, focusing on each one in turn to generate evidence against practical convergence, and focusing on them again to generate evidence for it.

The four aspects are: official level documents; curricular iniatives and associated textbooks; denominational participation in non-confessional courses; and data from Inspectorate reports. Broadly, these four aspects reflect thinking and theory at the highest level of the Scottish system, practice at grass-roots as recorded by statistics, and the same practice as interpreted by officials. The four aspects, taken together, should provide a balanced and whole picture of relations between the two models (3).

The first aspect used is the official documents, which are comparatively analysed. This means that regional policies are analysed and compared with official publications of the educational arms of the two main churches, the Scottish Catholic Education Commission and the Church of Scotland Board of Education. It is intended that this should reveal the extent of conscious and unconscious compatibility at official (as distinct from grass-roots) level.

For this aspect, all the old Regional Councils and Islands Councils were contacted and with one exception all responded by sending a copy of their current policy on Religious and Moral Education and, where this was separate, their policy on Religious Observance also. All the Regional or Islands policies studied had, with two exceptions [4] been written since publication of Religious and Moral Education 5-14 and broadly reflected its thinking. It is, I think safely, assumed that the new local government structure from 1996 onwards has not resulted in radical changes in policy towards religious education.

In addition, a number of documents published by committees and working groups with approval from the Scottish Office, such as SCCORE and COPE, have had influence on grass-roots religious education, and in

some cases have reflected and qualified official thinking on it. Their work is also analysed.

The second aspect is curricular initiatives and resources, which are analysed for the extent to which their rationales, aims and content are open to cross-sectoral use; resources originating in both sectors are analysed for their transferability. The resources are important in this section because they often accompany, and are associated with, particular curricular developments. The five-year period studied was one of intense curricular development for the subject, seeing the establishment of the 5-14 guidelines, Standard Grade, S.E.B. short courses and SCOTVEC modules, and the production of significant denominational resources. This period therefore offers the widest possible range of developments.

Third, the statistical extent of denominational participation in SCCORE-based curricular initiatives such as Standard Grade is assessed and commented on over the same period.

Denominational participation means the statistical extent to which the denominational sector has participated in SCCORE-based or other non-denominational examination or certificate courses over a given number of years. A study of denominational

participation can reveal a pattern of convergence if it shows, for instance, that the denominational system's support for a particular SCCORE-based course is substantial, or is growing; it can reveal an opposite pattern if it shows, for example, that the denominational system's support for a particular course is non-existent, weak, or diminishing.

Denominational participation is measured in two ways. First, by the proportion of pupils from denominational schools being presented or enrolled for an examination or course; second, by the proportion of denominational schools involving themselves in a course or examination. Whereas the first of these focuses on pupils, the second focuses on schools. It is rational and safe to assume tentatively that the first measure tends to identify an amount of pupil support, whereas the second measure tends to identify an amount of support from a school (usually, Principal Teacher and senior manager level). This is only a tentative assumption, since the figures are not intended to be an instrument for distinguishing between pupils' and teachers' attitudes. The figures were obtained from the Scottish Examination Board [5] and from the Scottish Vocational Education Council [6] with the express intent of analysing denominational participation.

Roman Catholic secondary schools are a minority within the Scottish system, and are declining proportionally within that system. To provide comparison of their size within the system alongside their participation, information was collected on the number and proportion of Scottish schools over the period 1989-1993 (7).

Where possible, this aspect also carries a discussion of the message of the figures in relation to the evidence provided by curriculum developments and textbooks (8). In cases where enough information has been available to compare both aspects, there is some congruence between the findings (9).

The fourth and last source, H.M. Inspectorate reports, are examined for their perspective on differences and similarities between practices of the two sectors. Of the four overall reports published since R.E. became inspectable in 1983, two have dealt with R.E. nationally (10), one investigated denominational schools (11) and one covered schools in two divisions of Strathclyde Region (12). Although the purpose of Inspectorate reports is simply to identify features contributing to effective learning and teaching (13), they throw some light on similarities of practice. Also, the Inspectorate has had an evolving interpretation of the differences, similarities and

proper roles of the two models which is significant [14].

2. Evidence of Tentative Convergence Patterns

(a) The Catholic Education Commission's Faith and Learning [15]: Some Shared Patterns in R.E.

In focusing on the question of denominational school identity, the Commission naturally emphasises divergent themes but also gives weight to some patterns shared with all schools in common. In the absence of any national denominational syllabus or R.E. policy, this programme covers every aspect of a denominational school's existence and ethos, including R.E. which is contextualised in the school's sense of mission and its self-understanding as a community of faith.

The document holds two themes in tension: the distinctiveness of Roman Catholic schools, and their participation in wider society [16]. The development programme has six aims which substantially emphasise divergence [17]. It also includes criteria for successful religious education [18].

The criteria may be divided into three types. The first type, overwhelmingly the largest, are consistent with non-confessional standards for religious education

and thus lean toward convergence [19].

The second type deals with content. Content should be approved (whose approval is not clear) and should adhere to current church teaching and the Catholic Christian tradition; broad areas of content are given. My interpretation of these criteria suggests a fine balance between conservative and radical pressures within the church, offering neither encouragement nor obstacles to a convergent interpretation [20].

The third type deals with the Roman Catholic school's relations, through religious education, with the wider church: its advisers, parents and priests [21]. By definition, non-confessional educational communities can offer little equivalent to these relationships [22].

We have seen that, as a process, Faith and Learning leans towards a divergent view, emphasising distinctiveness more than co-operation. This is quite natural in a denominational school identity programme. Even within such a programme, however, the criteria set for successful religious education overwhelmingly lean towards a convergent view, sharing values with non-confesional thinking. This is qualified by its definition of outcomes and its broad prescription of content, and to some extent by its relations with the

wider church. These qualifications are in themselves partially overcome by the subsequent publication of Roman Catholic 5-14 guidelines. The development programme may, therefore, be said to lend some qualified support to a convergence theory.

(b) The 5-14 Programmes: Progress and Obstacles

The two sets of guidelines [23] typify some of the most significant convergence patterns and also the most serious obstacles.

The mainstream document has indisputable non-confessional credentials: its rationale differs little from the philosophy of Millar and SCCORE. It presents two "separate but inter-related aspects", namely "the development of the understanding of religion as a significant area of human experience" and "personal growth enabling the individual to explore questions concerning the meaning of life and the value of the individual interpreted in relation to what is beyond man" [24]. These two aspects correspond with dimensions of religious education seen in prior official documents [25] and in leading non-confessional theorists [26]. In its aims, 5-14 again stands rooted in SCCORE thinking, but this time develops it [27].

In its appearance and format, the denominational

document is similar to the mainstream R.M.E. guidelines, but there are differences. As expected, they present a radically different rationale for religious education; they have also adapted some of the learning outcomes, suggested content and themes, but have retained the three outcome areas (28). There is a genuine respect for other world religions and other Christian traditions, stressed at the outset of the document and again in the learning outcomes (29).

The prime distinguishing characteristic of the denominational guidelines is that they place R.E. firmly within the context of the church's mission to evangelise: Jesus' commission to the church, as recorded in Mark 16:15, is the cornerstone of its educational enterprise (30). In evangelisation and catechesis, the school is in partnership with parish and particularly with home, since "parents are the first and best teachers of their children in the ways of faith" (31). In this context, the document is consistent with Roman Catholic thinking in England and the Vatican (32).

The aims of religious education are expressed overwhelmingly in doctrinal and denominational terms, which suggest that knowledge should be conditional upon orthodoxy and orthopraxis (33). Yet they are also a development of the thinking in Faith and Learning in so

far as they explicitly include world religions (34).

There are questions to be asked about an educational enterprise that describes itself as evangelisation. There are also questions about a curriculum which aims, among other things, to

> "help pupils to know, love and worship God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit"

and to

> "accept Christian moral values and live by them" (35).

In what sense is this any different from indoctrination? In schools where pupils do not achieve those aims, but are nevertheless thoughtful, spiritual, moral individuals, is that to be interpreted as failure? What can Muslim parents and pupils using Roman Catholic schools make of the Trinity as an educational aim?

If the intention is to *help* pupils to know and love God, this can only be achieved in so far as the pupils want to be so helped. In that case, the pupils' process might be better described as the mainstream document does:

> "develop their own beliefs, attitudes, moral values and practices through a process of personal search, discovery and critical evaluation" (36).

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> "develop their own beliefs, attitudes, moral values and practices through a process of personal search, discovery and critical evaluation" (36).

This wording is more open and more pupil-centred; but the denominational document, if it wishes to be intrepreted educationally, must carry the same meaning.

While the denominational guidelines claim consistency with Vatican thinking [37], there is one important respect in which they do not reflect Roman Catholic educational thought elsewhere. In the overall context of mission, the guidelines appear to make no distinction between the role of R.E. in the school and that of the rest of the teaching church. For the English bishops, with their national project on living and sharing the faith, such a distinction is clear: R.E. is

> "concerned with the religious development of all pupils who take part in the lessons" [38],

whereas other elements of a denominational school's life - such as its chaplaincy work, retreat programme, pastoral care and ethos - deal with other needs. Furthermore, R.E. is distinct from evangelisation and catechesis [39]. The Scottish denominational guidelines make no such distinctions. They acknowledge that the responsibility for evangelisation does not lie with R.E. alone [40], but they do not stress this point or develop it. Nor is there any attempt to establish educational principles

for R.E., as is done in the English denominational syllabuses which came out as part of the Bishops' project [41].

In its selection of strands and targets, the Scottish denominational document also diverges from its mainstream counterpart. Although it retains the three outcome areas, the strands within them are substantially altered to give more weight and detail to Roman Catholic doctrine and practice [42]. In numerical terms, the attainment targets give greater place to Christianity and Personal Search and less to Other World Religions [43]. The Christianity targets in the denominational guidelines contain more theological detail [44]; those in Other World Religions tend to replicate the mainstream guidelines [45]; those in Personal Search focus strongly on the personal development of the pupil in relation to an assumed framework of Roman Catholic piety [46]. The programmes of study [47] discourage change in content by suggesting chapters of existing primary textbooks.

The existence of a major denominational curriculum document which adopts the same outward form, organising structure and broad content areas as its mainstream counterpart, is a new development of significance and would seem to suggest a convergence in thinking. In

particular, the introduction of a system of assessment into denominational R.E. is new; so is the systematic treatment of world religions in denominational primary schools. These two new factors, taken together with the very existence of the document jointly published by the Scottish Catholic Education Commission and the Scottish Office Education Department, do signify a new level of co-operation and common concern.

Nevertheless, two factors in the denominational document suggest that convergence is not on the agenda. First, the radically changed rationale and aims section unambiguously places religious education into a mission framework, not an educational one. From this it could be deduced that they have little conscious interest in dialogue or convergence with the non-confessional model of religious education.

Second, the considerable extent to which individual attainment targets have been altered to have a more explicitly Christian meaning demonstrates limits to convergence. In implementing the guidelines, denominational schools retain their own resources, teach to different targets, and use different language from their non-denominational counterparts. This demonstrates a form of Roman Catholic selectivity which was alluded to by Rummery and is analysed below.

We can conclude that, while its existence in this form and its common elements are an important new development towards convergence, the denominational document itself demonstrates strongly that the present leadership in Roman Catholic education intends that full convergence in practice will not happen. Therefore in convergence terms, 5-14 represents a significant move, but not a decisive demonstration of the theory.

Before leaving the primary phase, it is instructive to take account of the English Catholic hierarchy's approved primary syllabus, Here I Am (48). With its inclusion of spiritual reflection, celebration and moral action, it is clearly in tune with the ancient balanced approach of catechesis, yet it also adopts a relatively progressive and open approach including pupil-centred, implicit themes, and the study of other world religions. This openness is quite severely undermined, however, by subsequent official publications (49).

(c) Standard Grade Religious Studies: Limited Agreement on Epistemology

With their shared set of aims, the Standard Grade and the S.E.B. short courses in Religious and Moral Education (50) dominate the middle secondary years and offer some openness to denominational thinking.

Standard Grade Religious Studies, like other subjects, was seen as a development of the old O-Grade in that it focused more on skills rather than content, it catered for all abilities, it encouraged active learning, it provided assessment which was directly related to what is learned, and it tested pupils against specific "grade-related criteria" in a way that provided worthwhile targets for all pupils (51).

Knowledge is defined in a way that is personal and balanced. Following Piaget, knowledge is acted on by the knower, who is involved in learning by combining new information with old and by making sense of experiences. Also, knowledge continually changes through a process of debate; thus it is "both personal and impersonal", subjective and objective in nature, and inseparable from understanding (52). Evaluating in the R.E. context is taken to mean forming opinions, imagining possible outcomes, e.g. implications of a belief or view or practice, supporting opinions with reasons, and weighing up evidence and different viewpoints (53). By opening the door to personal and subjective knowledge, this philosophy moves a shade away from the cognitive interest of the old 'O' grade and towards possibilities of personal transformation. These possibilities are not, however, explicitly

stated. Nevertheless, this is a small epistemological shift.

(d) Standard Grade Denominational Participation: Untried Potential

My analysis of pupil presentations for Standard Grade R.S. [54] shows that the course has risen in popularity every year since 1991 (and indeed since its introduction in 1989) and suggests that, given the opportunity, could rise substantially in the denominational sector. It has risen in popularity in the non-denominational sector, but has had unsteady growth in the denominational sector. 1992 sees a significantly higher denominational participation, both numerically and as a percentage, but this higher figure is not sustained in the following years and may perhaps be seen as denominational experimentation. Over the years taken, denominational participation as a percentage of total participation has risen only minimally. Comparative presentations for the 'O' Grade R.S. in its last three years are broadly similar [55].

Taken altogether, presentation figures show a steady denominational participation of somewhere between 7% and 9% in both the 'O' Grade and the Standard Grade. There is no trend towards more or less participation; the figures, though uneven, remain relatively steady over the years.

For a hypothesis of practical convergence, this is neither good nor bad news, suggesting no rising trend towards convergence.

So far, figures presented have shown individual pupil presentations from the two sectors. We now turn to figures which show denominational and non-denominational schools entering pupils for 'O' Grade and Standard Grade. Analysis of these figures provides different evidence (56).

The figures show that, in terms of schools, denominational participation has declined in recent years, both absolutely and as a percentage. The 'O' Grade was better supported by denominational schools in its last three years of statistically significant life than the new Standard Grade has been. The overall decline in participation by denominational schools is clear (57).

There is also a suggestion that denominational schools were slower to make the change from 'O' Grade to 'S' Grade than non-denominational schools. The 1991 figures show denominational schools presenting for 'O' Grade increasing by one, while non-denominational schools shifted to Standard Grade by nearly half their numbers. Since Standard Grade took over, the absolute

numbers of denominational schools presenting have never returned to the level seen in 1989 [58]. There is no obvious reason for this.

This analysis of denominational participation by school does little to help a theory of convergence, and suggests that confessional thinking is moving slowly away from, not towards, its non-confessional counterpart.

The Inspectorate commented on this in their report on denominational R.E. They saw denominational schools as "under-represented" in S.C.E. presentations since the courses began [59], despite the involvement of some denominational schools in the piloting of Standard Grade [60]. This may contrasted with the role of the Church of Scotland, which has produced a series of packs [61] intended to support the teaching of Standard Grade and the short courses. The packs include statements from the Church on a range of moral and theological issues treated in the syllabus.

Comparison of the pupil data with the school data does, however, suggest that the divergent movement by schools is not reflected by pupils [62]. Over the period, denominational pupil response to Standard Grade is not dented by the shrinking number of denominational schools offering it, but has achieved a slight

numerical growth and a fairly steady percentage in a shrinking number of denominational schools.

From this we may deduce two trends. First, there is an emerging educational schism among confessional educators. By and large the same denominational schools participate from year to year. The confessional community appears to be dividing between those schools committed to Standard Grade, with all that it implies in terms of participation in a shared agenda of other world religions and a skills-based, open and critical approach, and those who are not committed. In the end this may come down to the views of individual Principal Teachers. However, the underlying division here is connected to differing visions of Roman Catholic education. A similar division is seen in the debate over Weaving The Web. It indicates that, in terms of our third analytical category, that of Religion, Roman Catholic education as a whole cannot move towards non-confessionalism. It seems safe to assert that convergence in this category will not bring the entire confessional community with it.

The second deduction is a simple inference from the figures. Since numbers of denominational pupils are on the increase even while denominational schools participating are on the decrease, pupils seem more supportive of participation in open, critical and

skills-based study of religions than staff. It is not certain, but it is likely that if more denominational schools offered Standard Grade, there could be very substantial participation.

We can, therefore, tentatively claim that statistics for the R.S. examinations at age 16 suggest a gentle actual increase in denominational participation, and a strong potential increase. In light of this, we can further claim that statistics give tentative support to practical convergence theory.

(e) S.E.B. Short Courses: Denominational Participation

Presentations for the courses can yield no definite conclusions for or against convergence (63). Some analytical points can be made, and there is a reasonable deduction that denominational support has been substantial in selected cases.

A World of Values starts with the highest number of presentations and retains this position throughout (64). With its focus on moral issues and on organisations or campaigns which address those issues, its attractiveness can perhaps be explained both in SCCORE terms and in denominational terms. In SCCORE terms, this short course helps to deliver the values element in the triad of meaning, value and purpose. It

can also deliver several parts of the original aims of Standard Grade and the short courses [65]. Thus its conformity to SCCORE thinking makes it attractive to teachers who believe in that approach.

It binds moral thinking closely into beliefs in a way which is attractive to confessional religious educators [66], and it gives opportunities for the exposure of classic moral problems known to be of concern to the confessional community, such as abortion and the use of violence. Therefore although we cannot know the extent of take-up in denominational schools, we may logically posit the attractiveness of this short course for at least some teachers who believe in the confessional approach, when they make their choice of short courses.

Moral Issues in Technology starts with the second highest take-up, but by 1993 this has been outstripped by two others, *Living in a Plural Society* and *Issues of Belief*. In 1994 the gap is wider still. Of these three short courses, *Issues of Belief* might have been expected to attract a denominational response. In 1994, it is placed third in popularity, after *Living in a Plural Society* which seems a less likely choice for denominational teachers. But again, it is impossible to draw any hard conclusions on the data available [67].

Christianity Today begins in fourth position, but by 1993 it is overtaken by *Issues of Belief* and put into fifth position [68]. Although it would seem logical to presume substantial denominational response to this short course, teachers in denominational schools may be declining to take up this one precisely because of its content, preferring to deal with this content in purely denominational terms, unfettered by the conditions of the performance criteria. It is possible, therefore, that its relatively low place in popularity can be accounted for by a significant lack of denominational support. If this is the case, then a corollary could well be significant denominational support for some or all the short courses which are more popular (probably excepting *Living in a Plural Society*).

The least well supported short course is *Investigating a Religion* [69]. This requires pupils to investigate one of the other five main world religions, Christianity being excluded. For this reason, it is unlikely to be well supported in denominational schools.

While bearing in mind the tentative and speculative nature of these conclusions, it is reasonable to infer a substantial level of denominational support for selected short courses. This

is perhaps strengthened when we recall the extent of denominational participation in Standard Grade, with its highly comparable content and approach.

(f) The Higher: Denominational Participation

On balance the figures for Higher suggest a slowly increasing number of denominational schools and pupils participating. This evidence provides limited support for a theory of convergence.

The Higher course has grown steadily in overall popularity since 1989. Over the same period, denominational pupil participation has diminished as a proportion of the whole, but has grown numerically. Apart from 1990 (a reduction), denominational pupil participation has grown considerably and appears to begin levelling off from 1992 onwards (70).

Analysis by schools reveals new insights. As with presentations, the overall number of schools has risen, but here it peaked in 1992, declined minimally, and increased again. Since 1989, denominational participation has risen as a proportion, but peaked in 1990 before continuing a gentler increase. Numerically, denominational participation has increased every year (71); counted either by pupil presentations or by schools, there has been approximately a doubling of

denominational participation over five years, with pupils' choices keeping pace with schools' decisions (72).

(g) Inspectorate Reports: Observation of a Slight Reduction in Differences

Inspectorate thinking has evolved to recognise differences between the Millar Report's rationale and the confessional approach, reflecting "the raison d'etre of Roman Catholic schools and the different clienteles of the two sectors" (73). But the difference should not be over-emphasised; the SCCORE approach is committed to helping pupils to understand the nature and importance of religious commitment, and Veritas refers to the need to recognise the ecumenical, multi-faith and secularised social context (74).

These distinctions deserve our careful attention. The two models have some ground in common, according to the Inspectorate, because of the emphases in their most important documents; the differences between them can be reduced to the context of the school, its ethos (raison d'etre) and clientele (the wishes of parents and the expectations of the church). Implicitly, the Inspectorate have reduced the differences between the sectors. Thus while not proposing any change in the structure of two sectors and two models, there is a suggestion of the two models edging towards each other.

3. Evidence of Strong Convergence Patterns

(a) Regional Policies: Priority Given to Personal Formation

Study of the Rationale and Aims sections of the Regional policies revealed a number of common themes, which are identified here in their most common order of occurence in the policies overall:

(i) Personal reflection and response, commitment to personal search or discovery of truth and meaning in life [75];

(ii) Knowledge and understanding [76];

(iii) Developing moral and other attitudes [77];

(iv) Evaluation and other skills associated with investigating [78];

(v) Social cohesion [79].

This order shows that there has been development from the original SCCORE-based approach. Typically it has brought personal formation and reflectiveness to the fore ahead of knowledge and evaluation. This happened at the time of the 5-14 proposals which introduced the Personal Search as one formal content area among two others. The move towards personal relevance is not unconnected with developments and

criticisms of phenomenology, as shown in Chapter 2, but it does significantly carry non-confessional R.E. in the direction of the personal formation project which is and has always been so close to the heart of confessional education.

(b) Regional Priority for Personal Formation Reflected in Non-Confessional Textbooks

Textbooks by Palmer [80] tend to offer a non-confessional process of religious education with a particular liberationist and environmental slant. Pupils are told:

> "...some governments of the world spend more money on weapons and armies than they spend on health, education and housing combined. It doesn't take too much imagination to see what the rulers of those countries think is important" [81].

What distinguishes this work is its conviction, from a non-confessional stance, that formation in particular values beyond the usual consensual range is a valid exercise. The authors assume a very high degree of congruence between religious and moral study and personal commitment. Pupils are invited to reflect on, and take pleasure in, the commitments of others, and to take action [82].

Although they are critical of the possible negative influence of religion on personal development [83], Palmer *et al* propose personal commitment as a

legitimate area in non-confessional study. Rare in doing so, their work leans towards confessional territory.

(c) The Church of Scotland Board of Education: Support for the Vision and Practice of Non-Confessional R.E. Courses

The Church of Scotland, through its Department of Education, has taken an interest in religious education in a way which supports recognition and priority for the subject. For instance, its 1987 report on Church and School makes clear distinctions between pastoral chaplaincy work and curricular religious education (84). The report recognises the reality of the multi-faith society and the need for openness in religious education (85). The secular context of schools is not necessarily alien to the work of school chaplaincy (86); schools can and must find ways, with their chaplains, to be open to transcendence and to ultimate questions, even in a secular and plural context (87).

The report is significant in its recognition and acceptance of secular and plural conditions, and in its implicit commitment to seek and create meaning in these contexts. This confessional commitment to a non-confessional project may be claimed as a convergent attitude. This has not been matched by any similar public commitment by Roman Catholic authorities to see

their schools in the same way.

Not only in terms of vision, but also in practice the Board supports Standard Grade Religious Studies through the publication of a series of study packs on moral issues, with Church responses on a number of theological and moral issues which apppear in the syllabus (88).

(d) Weaving The Web - Adopting a Non-Confessional Approach

The series known as Weaving the Web represents the major lower secondary curricular development for Roman Catholic religious education in recent times. Originating in 1988, the series of six books was sponsored by the National Project of the English and Welsh bishops, entitled Living and Sharing Our Faith. This was a project designed to unite the educational and catechetical efforts of school, parish and home, bringing all under one rationale and system, and spreading wider undertsanding of its purposes and processes.

The six books, plus one teacher's book, were conceived not as textbooks but as a curricular framework which was flexible and adaptable in a variety of contexts. So flexible were they that two things happened. First, the uptake and use of the series was

substantial in denominational schools but also in non-denominational schools. Second, traditionalist Roman Catholics criticised the series for its open-endedness and its perceived failure to stand for doctrinal and moral truths (89). Several features of the programme gave it a unique ability to contribute to convergence. The aims are expressed in educational terms owing more to Grimmitt and the Westhill Project than to any other source (90). Its rationale and principles are similarly indebted (91). Pupil-centred learning is a hallmark of the series, envisaging pupils at Level 1 "relating experience", at Level 2 "analysing experience", and at Level 3 engaging in "action" to learn and grow (92). Key themes of the series are aspects of pupils' experience such as community and celebration (93). While the addressing of world religions should help pupils to become familiar with new material, the treatment of Christianity is often designed to make the familiar strange (94).

Despite their use of non-confessional sources, Lohan and McClure argue that their principles are consistent with confessional education. They deny the charge that R.E. made relevant to all pupils irrespective of faith background will merely become bland comparative religion (95); they believe that a religious education process which taps into pupils'

experience will lead to a deeper knowledge and understanding of Catholicism and other faiths; it will also, they claim, allow space for searching and questioning; and it will "challenge pupils to examine their own life stance, to deepen their personal faith commitment and to respect that of others" (96). Although this is a Catholic argument, it seems most strongly reminiscent of non-confessional aims (97).

What, in sum, has been the series' contribution to convergence theory? In support of the theory, we see a confessional curricular framework emerging from the church and being widely adopted in non-confessional schools. We see a series of books which introduce world religions systematically. We see a statement of aims and rationale which adopts educational arguments for non-confessional R.E., attempting to deploy the arguments in defence of a similar approach for confessional R.E. We see a programme strongly espousing principles of pupil-centred learning, active learning and a critical evaluative approach. All this evidence points very strongly in the direction of a possible practical convergence.

Evidence to the contrary exists not so much in the series as in the reception to it in some quarters. Although it was widely used and officially sponsored,

the series was heavily criticised by traditionalist Roman Catholic educators [98]. Its failure to be accepted by traditionalists means that it has not carried the whole confessional community with it, and is open to accusations of having sacrificed some Catholic educational principles such as revelation and truth in its desire to occupy the middle ground. This perception, regardless of its accuracy, tends to weaken the possibility of convergence, because it means that not all confession practitioners will feel able to subscribe to the convergence process.

There is one other weakness in its contribution to convergence. The series is distinctive in its confessional adoption of non-confessional principles, practices and content; in the making of the series, confessionalism has moved towards non-confessionalism. But it is less easy to see how, if at all, non-confessionalism is changed in this process. Has non-confessionalism moved towards confessionalism as much, if at all? A genuine convergence requires that both models move and are transformed, and cannot be satisfied if one model moves while the other remains the same.

Despite these reservations, the significance of the series - and the widespread use of the books and their ethos in both confesional and non-confessional

contexts - remains very considerable, and presents strong evidence of a convergence of practice.

(e) S3 and S4 Courses and Texts: Epistemological Links

The implied epistemology of Standard Grade was identified as a tentative sign of convergence [99]. The aims and philosophy are shared with the six S.E.B. short course [100]. The latter's greater emphasis on moral education, definined in developmental, active and formative terms [101] compares strongly with the confessional interest in formation and in transformative knowledge.

Learning and teaching approaches favour active learning and processes based on the pupils' experience. There should be examination and clarification of pupils' own beliefs, attitudes and values. There should be a balance of subjective material (i.e. thoughts, feelings and attitudes) with objective material (i.e. observable date and phenomena). Finally there should also be evaluation, which is defined as forming a personal opinion, with reasons, and recognising the provisional nature of held opinions [102].

One text book which is closely associated with both the short courses and the Standard Grade is Search: The Christian Experience [103]. One of its

authors was intimately involved in the arrangements for Standard Grade, and this forms one of the few distinctively Scottish R.E. textbooks. As the first word of its title suggests, the book encourages the pupil's active inquiry and reflection throughout. The opening chapter sets pupils off on a personal search initiated by a Gauguin painting (104). Just as the ethos of Standard Grade emphasises skills above content, so this book is a personal search based on questions rather than a delivery of content.

Exploring beliefs and worship in three traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland), the book sets regular tasks which go beyond understanding and require pupils to internalise, reflect, and evaluate (105). This book forms a strong supporting resource for non-confessional courses, and in its definition of knowledge it leans significantly towards formative confessional processes.

(f) S.E.B. Short Courses - Positive Roman Catholic Response

In 1991 the Catholic Education Commission responded to the short courses by commissioning the curriculum development work of William Liston. In terms of convergence theory, the response was the most positive and open yet seen. Liston's work interpreted the rationale and aims of the courses, welcoming their

development and urging teachers in denominational secondary schools to give due consideration to the benefits offered by them [106]. He went on to develop parallel confessional aims and justification for the courses, suggesting particular content, approaches and resources for four out of the six.

Liston's rationale is defined in relation to two other "distinct, yet at times overlapping" concepts, evangelisation and catechesis [107]. Evangelisation is a distinctive feature of the whole school, and is distinguishable from classroom R.E. "where the focus is more directly educational" [108]. It is worth noting in passing that this distinction between evangelisation and education, gently and carefully made by Liston in 1991, is not recognised by the writers of the denominational 5-14 document in 1994. Catechesis, for Liston, assumes a faith commitment on the part of the participants. It is usually an adult process, and in so far as it can take place with adolescents, it should be done "with an eye to the future", i.e. to the lifelong journey of the pupil [109].

In relation to these two concepts, R.E. in the Catholic secondary school has, according to Liston, two tasks: first, to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the areas of humanity's religious

search for *"meaning, value and purpose"* (his italics) (110) as outlined in the short courses arrangements document. This aspect of religious education can be described as "education in religion" (his emphasis) (111). Italics and emphasis indicate that his indebtedness to, and agreement with, SCCORE-based thinking is conscious at this point.

R.E.'s second task is to be of value as a form of catechesis by promoting the development and maturing of faith. This is to be a faith based not on blind obedience, nor brought about by coercion, but rather based on a reasoned, personal response to the call of Jesus. This aspect of religious education can be described as "education in faith" (his emphasis) (112). Consciously or not, his phrase is reminiscent of Rummery's Model 2, "educating in" religion (113).

If these two tasks seem to be classic expressions of the two divergent models, Liston makes clear where his sympathies lie:

> "In attempting to assist pupils in both these areas, the Catholic teacher is conscious of the necessity of being true to educational principles" (114).

By emphasising educational aspects of catechesis, Liston believes that a reconciliation of catechesis and true education is possible. The catechetical element

should centre in on themes which are predominant in human life experience, such as freedom, justice, relationships, morality, suffering and happiness [115]. Catholic religious education therefore should take on an educational form which

> "on the one hand, respects freedom and encourages personal development and growth, and on the other hand, provides the context within which the pupil can find meaning and purpose in the everyday experiences of life" [116].

The context of which he speaks is the assumed faith context of the R.E. class in a Roman Catholic school. It is this context which makes the difference in terms of the second (faith education) task. The predominately educational focus means that spiritual activities such as prayer, reflection and liturgy may take place but would be more relevant in a retreat setting [117].

Moral education, for Liston, is based on the personal call of Jesus to follow him. The process of moral education gives the learner knowledge and understanding with which to make a mature personal response to this call. It takes place in the context of the church which is "a community of moral wisdom" [118]. Despite this Christ-centred approach, Liston is not closed to the rationale of the original document, accepting its six fundamental social values [119] as

an integral part of Roman Catholic teaching [120]. He also accepts that young people are influenced by the secular plural society, that they are naturally questioning of authority as part of their search, and that this should not be seen as a negative factor, arguing that it can lead either to rejection of faith or to a deeper, adult commitment [121].

Liston and the Catholic Education Commission accept the five aims of the short courses [122] as a valid educational basis. Liston adds two other aims, namely:

> "To assist pupils to consider the implications of Christian belief in their lives;
>
> To assist pupils in preparing to make an adult commitment to God in faith" [123].

While the first of these presents no obstacle to practical convergence, the second might; but if seen in the light of Liston's preference for educational emphasis, it can be understood in an educational sense [124].

Liston broadly accepts mainstream recommended methods, content and resources. He connects "working with the the whole class...(to) reinforce the social cohesion of the class" [125] with building up a class which is a community of faith [126] Also, he likens

developing attitudes of empathy and tolerance [127] with the fundamental Christian outlook [128].

Liston's general approach to the short courses - an approach endorsed by the Catholic Education Commission - is characterised by its open and positive nature, and is in contrast to the more cautious approach taken a year later to 5-14. He places his own limits on convergence through his ideas on key concepts [129] content [130] and resources [131], and has different nuances of aim and rationale, but retains an open approach. As such, his work provides us with the the strongest example of practical convergence in curriculum development in R.E. in Scotland.

(g) SCOTVEC Modules: Denominational Participation

Denominational pupil support of SCOTVEC modules is substantial but selective [132]. In the modules Religion & Morality, and to a lesser extent Religion & Politics, we see a substantial and sustained interest, sometimes a majority. The corresponding modules from the old set are also well supported, suggesting that denominational participants have been consistently selective [133]. The sample overall is small and produces some rogue figures [134]; even allowing for this, however, denominational participation is substantial, more so than the inferred levels of

denominational support for any S.E.B. courses.

We may imagine that denominational education, concerned to bind moral development into a religious education programme, will express interest in a module giving opportunities for exploration of ethical issues. We may also imagine that a concern for justice and peace could express itself in support for a module on religion and politics.

Two others of the new set of modules, Religion & Community and Practical Investigation in Religious Studies, attract considerable support in their first numerically significant year, but this dwindles (135). There is no clear reason for this pattern.

The last of the old set, Religious Belief & Expression, was designed for use in denominational schools. Yet its take-up is minimally denominational; it attracts a far greater non-denominational enrolment (136). One-way convergence in this direction is interesting and unusual.

Study of the statistics for denominational participation by school reveals a picture of denominational schools selecting modules on the basis of appropriate content (137).

For the modules they select, denominational

schools are often contributing larger numbers of pupils per school than their non-denominational counterparts [138]. For lower percentages of denominational schools to achieve higher percentages of enrolments, large numbers of pupils must be enrolled in those schools. This, taken together with my own experience, suggests that some denominational schools are enrolling all or most of their S5 or S6 cohorts. At the same time, other denominational schools choose not to involve themselves at all; this suggests a pattern of polarisation amongst confessional educators.

The figures for Religion & Politics [139] suggest that, while confessional teachers feel this area of enquiry to be important, it is less well supported by confessional pupils.

Finally, the figures for Religious Belief & Expression [140], the denominational module, offer evidence for non-denominational interest in confessional study, indicating a sort of convergence.

Evidence from SCOTVEC module participation is broadly supportive of denominational participation. Although only one module, Religion & Morality, attracts regularly growing denominational support, participation is substantial in other areas. However, this support is usually tagged to content known to be of interest and

concern to Catholic educators, and has not spilled over into substantial support for other SCOTVEC modules. This restricting qualification is picked up by the Inspectorate (141), which notes a "growing trend" among the denominational R.E. departments to seek certification where there is no conflict with the national syllabus or with time; and this is especially so in S5 and S6. Non-denominational support for one denominational module provides evidence of corresponding convergence on the part of non-confessional educators.

3. Critical Interpretation of the Convergence Patterns

The evidence I have identified shows some clear instances of the models co-operating or moving towards each other in Scotland, from tentative reinterpretations by the Inspectorate through to strongly argued connections in Liston's work. But the onus must be on the convergence theory to show that this evidence amounts to any practical realignment: my evaluation of the evidence is that, while it is significant of movement, it does not amount to a systematic realignment, and that individual pieces of evidence apparently suggesting convergence are open to other interpretations.

(a) Denominational Participation: Some Caveats

Statistical analysis has produced no evidence of a general pattern of denominational participation. Taking all S.E.B. courses together, we see a slight decline in denominational participation [142]. Standard Grade figures show unsteady growth and offer tentative support for the theory. S.E.B. short course figures, which could not be broken down into sectors, also offer tentative support, based on sensible speculation. SCOTVEC figures demonstrate stronger support for convergence in both directions, qualified by a wide-scale denominational decision to limit its involvement to its own areas of interest. Figures for the Higher show limited support based on a slow numerical increase, but figures for the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies are unpromising [143]. My analysis has already shown that the same few denominational schools are choosing to participate every year [144].

Certain clear conclusions can be drawn. Denominational participation is happening, and is more often growing than diminishing. But it does not unite the entire confessional community; broadly the same schools participate, and do not participate, from year to year. There is potential amongst pupils for more denominational participation at age 16; at Higher, pupil participation and school participation keep pace;

in denominational schools, pupil enrolment in some SCOTVEC modules is unusually high and may reflect teachers' tendency towards participation more than it reflects pupils' wishes.

This presents us with a further puzzle, in that we inferred from Standard Grade figures [145] that denominational pupil interest in open, critical R.E. might be outstripping denominational teachers' commitment to it. Yet in post-16 education, almost exactly the opposite trend seems to be at work: denominational teachers' interest in SCOTVEC modules seems to exceed denominational pupils'. There is no obvious explanation for this dramatic reversal in attitudes [146].

Denominational participation in S.E.B. and SCOTVEC courses tends to select content areas with which confessional educators feel an affinity, (for instance, abortion, euthanasia, justice) rather than trying out new areas or approaches.

In summary, the evidence is that a substantial practical convergence as demonstrated by denominational participation is not taking place. There is some practical convergence, but where it exists it is qualified.

(b) Critiques of Apparent Convergence

(i) Cultural Convergence

In several cases, regional policies and other documents give a privileged place to Christianity [147], suggesting a movement towards the confessional position.

Evidence of the stress on Christianity is seen in other non-confessional quarters, including the curriculum material exemplars for secondary schools published by SCCORE [148] and the uptake of SCOTVEC modules [149]. Confessional religious education is held up by Inspectors as a model for all [150], although this attitude is later modified [151].

While this amounts to several instances of non-confessional educators behaving like confessionalists, and therefore suggests a one-way convergence, I cannot on reflection accept this as positive evidence. The favouring of Christianity does not occur in all regional policies [152]; in those identified, the privileged position is for cultural and historical reasons [153]; the Grampian document clearly highlights the controversial nature of the debate about the place of Christianity [154]. I interpret this pattern not as an expression of non-confessional thought, but as an aberration from it.

The root cause of this aberration lies in the continuing debates about the nature of Scotland as a Christian country, or a country with a Christian heritage [155]. The non-denominational sector contains some who wish to emphasise Scotland's identity as a Christian country and, allow this desire to be reflected in their educational work. McDonald identifies "folk religion" or "Christian heritage" attitudes in Scotland, and argues that these form an obstruction to the credibility of the subject [156]. A similar outlook is at work in England [157], where it is strongly criticised on educational and political grounds [158]. My name for this phenomenon is cultural convergence, with the proviso that it is not admissible as evidence of genuine convergence of models.

A shared characteristic of this phenomenon is that it is backward-looking. In Scotland it may at times have a pro-Protestant or anti-Catholic agenda with sectarian or racist implications. These characteristics render it incredible as a sign of convergence and unity. Even without these characteristics, cultural convergence fails in two other ways.

First, it forms a position in which many Scots and particularly many educators cannot agree. Its premises on the nature of Scottish society and on educational

practice, being invaded by assumptions about Christian truth, history, and the responsibilities of teachers, will not attract consensus, and therefore cannot form a basis for any genuine convergence between the models and their communities.

Second, it misses and indeed is overtaken by the movement towards convergence happening from the confessional community, where openness and a recognition of the need to study world religions is a reality.

(ii) Convergence by Inclusion

There are several instances of the confessional community being included in overall statements or programmes devised by the non-confessional community. In this type of convergence, the confessional model may be visualised as a subset of the non-confessional. Three regional policies, of which two were from from the largest metropolitan authorities in Scotland, express the confessional-non-confessional relationship in terms of inclusion (159). Recently the Inspectorate suggested that their aims in R.E. were additional to those shared by all schools (160). Convergence by inclusion suggests a positive movement, mutually agreed by both communities, to a form of toleration and co-operation, in that confessional religious education is subsumed in non-confessional. But this is not an

adequate model of convergence for our purposes.

Inclusion of the confessional minority within definitions set by the non-confessional majority may remove power and control from the minority. In such a case, there would no power for confessional principles to influence anyone beyond their own domain; yet there would be opportunity for frequent encroachment into the confessional sector, or for changes in the overall principles which would effectively nullify or dilute the extra principles of that sector.

Convergence by inclusion may also ghettoise confessional schools and create attitudes of defensiveness and misunderstanding. If the education community as a whole adopts this model, resulting attitudes could become oppressive and exclusive, contrary to genuine convergence. There would be an assumption that certain educational principles apply to all, that in a particular sector, a few extra principles also apply, but that the majority need to take no heed of those extra principles and may even override them when necesary.

In short, this type of convergence has no mutuality, which true convergence requires. It appears as an inclusive gathering of the two models, but when examined in its symbolic power and probable outcomes,

it changes shape into something far less attractive.

(iii) Roman Catholic Selectivity

This phrase was coined by R.M. Rummery [161], who identified it as a possible relationship between the models. In this relationship, confessionalists might take anything from a non-confessionalist approach, but would still insist on confessional content being safeguarded. I have noticed this pattern in denominational schools' use of and participation in some national certificated courses. Statistics suggest that denominational schools are using the certificated courses as a structure, but focusing only on content which reflected and agreed with their own. This was particularly accentuated in the use of the SCOTVEC national certificate modules [162].

Roman Catholic selectivity can be a building block for greater convergence in that, in small ways, it draws confessionalists into a non-confessional world, for instance through habituating them to assessment procedures, involving them in in-service, and opening doors for them into other realms of content. On its own, however, it cannot qualify as a true convergence of models. Where courses are selected only when they conform to the interests of confessionalism, there will be no substantial transformation of confessionalism. I

have further tentatively suggested that in some cases the denominational selection of non-confessional modules indicates a *faute de mieux* attitude (163). Selectivity is also flawed because it is localised in certain schools and phases (164).

I identified one case of non-confessional selectivity, in which a confessional module (Religious Belief and Expression) attracted a large majority of its enrolments from non-denominational schools (165). It is difficult to know the reasons for this attraction, and tempting to argue that if more opportunities were available, there would be a wider pattern of non-confessional selectivity. Perhaps it is safer to point out that cultural convergence thinking may have been behind some of this movement.

(iv) One-Way Convergence

In instances where one model moves towards the other without a corresponding mutual movement, this is described as one-way convergence. Weaving The Web was found to have this characteristic (166). I also discovered other examples of one-way convergence, tentatively in Faith and Learning and strongly in Liston's response to the S.E.B. short courses. One-way movements are to some extent inevitable in a system in which curricular developments emerge without universal imposition. The most notable exception to one-way

convergence is the comparison of the two 5-14 documents, the possibilities and limits of which I have analysed under tentative patterns above.

Most one-way movements are from denominational towards non-denominational positions: four denominational examples of tentative movement are given, and three examples of strong movement. In contrast, there are only one tentative and three strong movements from non-denominational to denominational positions [167]. In effect, therefore, one-way convergence usually means a concession from the confessional community to the non-confesional, with little ground given in return.

These are useful initiators of a possible movement towards mutual convergence, and are perhaps necessary to start the process. But one-way convergence, no matter how strong, cannot be accepted as convergence evidence. The movements, on whichever side they originate, are not mutual; they always will involve one community joining the other, and thus never will be able to envision mutual de-coupling from old positions towards a shared new model. Unconsciously, they share a theoretical affinity with the reconcilers discussed in chapter 3. Ultimately they cannot produce a new converged model.

(v) Obstacles to Convergence

Some features of Scottish provision form definite obstacles to a process of convergence in the sense that they give evidence of the models moving away from each other or reacting differently to new developments.

Religious Observance is one example. Whereas the confessional tradition has typically integrated learning with belief and worship, in ways identified in chapter 2 above, the non-confessional community exhibits discomfort over Religious Observance and usually attempts to distinguish it from curricular R.M.E. Such efforts represent, at the very least, a resistance to any movement towards the confessional model.

Since Regional Councils were exhorted to review their own policies and to implement national policy on this matter (168), most have introduced sections of their R.M.E. policy, or separate documents. R.M.E. and R.O. are seen as discrete but related activities (169). Two policies take a cautious tone stressing the need for high quality (170). One policy evinces profound concern to distinguish R.O. from worship and to impose strict educational limits on it (171). These examples constitute a significant difference with the habitual confessional use of ritual and liturgy.

Confessional textbooks remain generally unsusceptible to convergence trends. Other religions are seen as less important [172]; doctrinal or scriptural material dominates [173]; and the ecclesial and faith context of the enterprise is stressed [174].

Certain curricular aspects of non-confessionalism remain stubbornly divergent in their rationale and aims, including the revised Higher [175] and even more so the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies [176]. Since these provisions are to be overtaken by the new Higher Still structure, not much weight may be placed on them as evidence.

(c) Conclusion: Limits of Practical Convergence

This analysis of convergence patterns has identified several instances of movement but has found that most of them are explainable, or weakened, in terms of phenomena discussed in section (b) above [177]. When those instances are removed, the most substantial remaining evidence of mutual convergence is the two 5-14 documents, showing detailed and important new parallels between the models but (in the case of the denominational document) stopping well short of any intention to converge.

Four other features of the evidence raise crucial

difficulties for a theory of practical convergence. In the first place, most instances of convergence are localised in the curriculum. They are seen in particular curricular initiatives, most notably in 5-14, Weaving the Web and Liston's response to the S.E.B. short courses, but cannot be said to be systematic in the whole curriculum. It may well be unreasonable to expect universal movement; but these localised instances are far from systematic, and therefore cannot be claimed as evidence of any organised dynamic towards convergence.

In the second place, convergence is localised in Scotland. This means that it takes place in some schools, and usually the same schools, but is not systematic or popular in a wide spread of schools. Analysis of denominational participation suggests that the same small number of denominational schools are responsible for the participation, and therefore that a majority of denominational schools are regularly staying out of non-confessional courses.

This point leads on to the third, which is that the confessional community is itself divided and cannot unite in a programme of convergence. Evidence of the intra-confessional division in education goes back, arguably, to distinctions between Augustine and Chrysostom (178), but is manifested more recently in

differences over resources such as Weaving The Web, over participation in Standard Grade and SCOTVEC modules, in the difference between the Liston response to the S.E.B. short courses and the C.E.C. response to 5-14, and in the self-confessed compromise in Faith and Learning. I suggest that this intra-confessional dispute is long-standing and deep, having theological as well as pedagogical roots. Confessional movement towards a non-confessional model, or joining of a converged model, would be dependent on resolving this dispute in a progressive direction: this is extremely unlikely to happen.

Fourth, these forms of convergence are not supported by theoretical work within Scotland. Signs of convergence at theoretical level do exist and are explored in the comparison of Groome, Grimmitt and Rodger (179); but of these theorists, only Rodger is Scottish, and he belongs to the non-confessional community. No official Scottish confessional theoretical work exists to argue towards convergence. Semi-official work (180) and unofficial work (181) do make the argument, but have not been supported officially. In the absence of such official theoretical support, forms such as one-way confessional convergence and Roman Catholic selectivity can only be interpreted as a drift which is happening more or less by accident,

while convergence by inclusion remains unsanctioned by confessional authorities. The denominational 5-14 document makes it clear that full convergence is definitely not officially sanctioned (182).

My analysis clearly reveals a pattern of steps towards convergence, but equally clearly it reveals qualifications and obstacles to overall convergence. It also reveals the existence of some types of convergence which, while apparently indicative of closeness or mutual approach, do not constitute real mutual development towards a shared model. Any suggestion, therefore, that a practical convergence in Scotland possesses a dynamic toward unity and can match or outstrip the theoretical dialogue happening worldwide, is falsified by this analysis. Some important steps to convergence have happened in the Scottish system, and these may serve as an essential prelude to some new evolution towards convergence; but the steps are heavily qualified, weak and finite, and the process can make little or no further distance under its own momentum. If convergence is to come, it will not be by shuffled steps of the old models, but by the firm tread of a new one. The next chapter argues that a new synthesis must occur in order to progress convergence further.

Digest of Chapter 6

EVOLUTION TOWARDS A CONVERGED MODEL: THE THERAPEUTIC-LIBERATIVE METAPHOR FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chapter 6

EVOLUTION TOWARDS A CONVERGED MODEL: THE THERAPEUTIC-LIBERATIVE METAPHOR FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In this chapter, I argue that convergence cannot evolve any further unless new thinking is introduced. After discussing how new metaphors might be found and applied, I offer precedents and applications for a metaphor, some suggestions about how it might work in practice, and some notes on further issues raised and tasks to be done.

Significant evidence of convergence has been presented in the preceding chapters. But neither on a theoretical nor on a practical level has the argument been driven forward to the creation of a converged model. On the strength of evidence presented thus far, it cannot be: the obstacles - the failure of previous theorists to break fully into converged models (1), Christian commitment to the reign of God, differences in language (2), a peaked and declining denominational participation, a divided confessional community (3) - are too serious. The convergence process exists, but is not strong enough on its own to bring the models together. One option, therefore, is to accept that the

models have travelled together increasingly in the present period, and may continue to learn from each other in the years to come. This option lets the process analysed in chapters 4 and 5 continue naturally without looking for new models. It is, in effect, a continuation of the "reconciling" approach described in chapter 3. But to leave the two models as they are, closely related but not systematically integrated, would not lead to any gradual closing of the gap (4), and would be to return to the unsatisfactory confusion identified in chapter 1. In view of this, a new rationale and model for religious education is needed to carry forward and complete the convergence already begun, and to embrace and subsume the best of the two existing models.

1. Notes on the Construction of a New Model

If there is to be a new model, how is it to be built? My method has been to use new metaphors for religious education. A new metaphor of religious education is its self-understanding expressed in the terms - the lore - of another particular discipline or field of interest. It feeds this self-understanding into my three analytical categories, namely anthropology, epistemology and religion; while doing so, it ensures that the self-understanding is

appropriate and in reasonable continuity with religious education traditions. For a metaphor to work, it must keep a certain detachment and avoid over-literal application or total imposition. Any discipline chosen must therefore fulfil three conditions.

First, to be relevant and usable a metaphor must have sufficient interest for, and similarity and sympathy with religious education, without having to be totally identifiable with it. In other words it must be a related discipline which can lend itself to the self-understanding of religious education, but as a metaphor it will have limits of appropriateness and need not - and ought not to - be applied absolutely. For instance, a scientific metaphor of religious education has failed because it lacks sufficient sympathy with the epistemology and approach to religion which are required, and because it has at times been over-applied.

Second, a metaphor must allow some continuity with previous models and traditions of religious education and with those theorists who attempted convergence or realignment. New metaphors should look again at older models no longer in popular use, and adapt them (5). For instance, the advocacy approach, which used to advocate Christianity, can now envisage the teacher as

a genuine, humane advocate of whatever insights and practices are being studied, in whatever religion. Also the teacher can be the advocate of particular values which are essential to an open study of religion, such as toleration, humility, willingness to be changed and challenged.

Another example might be the comparative approach. Here, the teacher's role is no longer the overseer of a comparison between religions, using categories which may not be appropriate; instead, the teacher may challenge the categories and develop analytical and imaginative skills in the learner.

Recalling the discussion of earlier convergence theories which were grouped as "reconciling" and "prophetic" (6), a new metaphor must have the opportunity to adopt what has been best from both sets of theorists. Prophetic theorists were those who attempted a new model, and some characteristics of these models may be capable of inclusion. Reconciling theorists were also important because of their attempts to move the models closer together, and to give them sight of each other's underlying assumptions and procedures. Efforts at reconciliation, on both theoretical and practical levels, have been vital in challenging assumptions.

The third condition requires a degree of universality. A new metaphor must originate in a field of interest which can find sufficient resonance with the values and concerns of the contemporary secular society. This is important because the metaphor aims to support a religious education model appropriate for all schools, including those which see themselves as faith communities. The two older models failed to speak to the whole of society in this way [7]. Neither of them could command a wide enough sympathy to serve as a supporting lore for a new converged model.

A total consensus of sympathy and support for a new metaphor will be virtually impossible to find [8]. It is acknowledged here that a plural society may indeed mean plural understandings and plural metaphors, applied with variable weight. It may be, therefore, that the new converged model takes more than one source-discipline as its metaphor. Two sources are discussed in this chapter: there is no claim that they can form an exclusive basis for the next evolution in religious education, but they are offered in the belief that, taken together, they enrich the subject's self-understanding and appeal widely amongst the young and among teachers.

The metaphor chosen for development here is taken from two source-disciplines, namely psychotherapy and

liberation theology. These fields of interest are defined as broadly as possible in specific sections below. It is appropriate at this point to explain my choice.

One of the criticisms made of the reconciling theorists in chapter 3 was their tendency to orient themselves by the old critical-immersive, or education-nurture lodestars, and their failure to escape fully from the polarity this suggested. Therefore, every care is taken here to ensure that the polarity is transcended by using two sources from beyond the religious education world.

However, for those theorists and practitioners who find the polarity still important, the two metaphors can offer a Dunnesque process of passing over and coming back between the poles. Liberation theology may represent a confessional movement which passes over from Christianity to the secular by embracing secular concerns, methods and movements of thought (9). Psychotherapy, on the other hand, may represent a secular movement, born of critiques of religion and free of religious structures, but which passes over from the secular to the spiritual because of its interest in the whole person, its commitment to integrity and ethics and its ability in some cases to

make connections with theological doctrines and pastoral processes in the church [10].

These two metaphors, therefore, complement each other in a passing-over of the secular-spiritual divide. They also complement each other in their focus on internal and external processes. Therapy, etymologically related to accompanying, is a naturally inward process, while liberation processes usually relate to economic or political structures, by nature external. I begin by developing the metaphors separately, then integrate them.

The two metaphors discussed here are not the only languages available for re-expressing religious education. Some work on an aesthetic model has been done by various authors [11]. By and large, however, these authors are concerned with drawing parallels between the artistic and the religious, rather than with an understanding of religious education itself. My feeling is that one curricular area cannot rely on another for its philosophy; therefore, while I recognise the worth of artistic and aesthetic images for religious education, I have not pursued them here, but have reached out to disciplines which lie outwith the school curriculum.

2. Therapeutic Metaphor for a Converged Model: Precedents

> "Do you know what intelligence is?... It is the capacity, surely, to think freely, without fear, without a formula, so that you begin to discover for yourself what is real, what is true; but if you are frightened, you will never be intelligent [12]".

In chapter 1, I identified an increasing interest in psychology and psychotherapy as part of the process of secularisation by which traditionally religious or ecclesial functions have been ceded or lost by the church to therapy. In chapter 4, I discussed holistic ways of knowing and being [13], an area in which the psychotherapy tradition also has an interest [14]. Both patterns suggest that the older models' divisions over content and aim were less important than the underlying affective attitude of the learner and teacher.

Connections between religious education and therapy have been suggested on theoretical levels. The first connection I have found is by Johann Herbart. His pre-Freudian interest in the unconscious led him to develop what has become known as a law of apperception in which the teacher must enable the learner to match new insights to those already held in the unconscious [15]. This law, worked out in steps, bears some resemblance to the later Piagetian principle of the mind working on concepts, and also to Groome's third

movement in shared Christian praxis.

One recent study of the historical Christian confessional tradition looks forward to a future religious education process based on a progressive theology of the self, implying a therapeutic analogy (16). Theissen's defence of confessionalism argues that commitment is a good aim for education when prefaced with the adjective "healthy". Healthy commitment is a *sine qua non* of happiness, self-realisation and peace of mind, and leads to a healthy society (17).

Outwith confessionalism, John Wilson's 1971 study of religious emotions retained a strong bias to the cognitive (18) but accepts that educating the emotions is more akin to psychotherapy than to subject-learning (19).

An interest in the links between psychotherapy and religious education led one international journal to devote an entire issue to the topic, commenting that

> "those of us in religious education would do well to recognise our own participation in the task of making persons whole" (20).

The recent rise of interest in experiential and affective techniques (21) suggests a belief that the subject could encourage qualities such as balance of faculties, healthy use of time, and personal wholeness. Implicit in this type of approach is a concern for the

whole person which indicates a belief that religious education is relevant to a person's inner choices and state of being. The interest in the spiritual and moral development of the pupil has had some people writing in the language of hurt and healing (22).

In the Scottish system, the R.M.E. guidelines include attainment targets in the area of "Personal Search", and this cluster of targets focuses on relationships with nature and with other people, and on "Ultimate Questions". A target for infants is to be able to "develop the confidence and ability to express their own questions about God, the natural world, suffering, death etc... (and) be able to discuss these questions... and share their feelings and ideas" (23). It is this type of task which brings religious education a little closer to the territory of personal life and therapeutic methods.

A study of the Gospels can reveal to educators the frequency with which the redactors present Jesus' teaching function as intertwined with his healing function, through the dialogue between parable material juxtaposed with miracle material (24). Both of these types of event are used in the Gospels as indicators of the reign of God. Christians have pointed out how salvation is etymologically connected with health (25).

Pastoral care within Christian contexts has developed a self-critical perspective, wishing to move beyond its traditional locations and tasks into other areas. For instance, Pattison cites, as recent developments, the re-siting of pastoral care within the horizon of values and ethics, and the extending of its scope and boundaries to include inter-denominational work, feminism, inter-cultural and inter-religious work (26). Such a shifting of boundaries moves the pastoral more towards the educational, in the broad sense that it encourages participants to face and enquire into issues.

Psychology as a discipline has taken account of religion in variant ways. Between the religious experience of belief or knowing and the personal insight which arises from therapy there can be similarities of process and outcome (27). At its closest, the relationship is merely that of two differing ways of explaining the same insight about human nature (28). Fundamental questions about meaning, value, purpose and identity, when not attended to, can cause people to suffer and seek therapy (29).

In the work of these thinkers I see only the beginnings of a therapeutic rationale for religious education. My next task is to express a theory of

religious education using a therapeutic metaphor.

3. Philosophy of a Converged Model Based on a Therapeutic Metaphor

> "The heart of education and the heart of prayer - and certainly the heart of spirituality - is the giving of attention to what is not ours to command, to control, to wish other than it is; but ours to submit ourselves to, to learn from, if we wish to be rightly related to reality" (30).

This section uses the three analytical categories to describe a philosophical underpinning for the new model. As has been found before, especially with Groome, the three categories spill over into each other, and this is considered to be a useful indicator of the coherence of the rationale.

Religious education, at its best, explores meaning and fosters growth. These processes are by no means painless for the learner: either by engagement in the search, or by ignoring it, the individual pupil and the teacher experience feelings of frustration, loss and confusion often associated with growth (31). Therefore in seeking to construct a philosophy of religious education in therapeutic terms, we can take account of this experience of pain in learning. This is explored first in terms of woundedness as an anthropological characteristic.

(a) Anthropology

(i) Woundedness as a Shared Category of Humanity

For psychotherapy, there is the enormous consensus around the idea of human beings as meaning-makers, who live with a common woundedness. Human beings, it is believed, share the insight that the sense of meaninglessness is the greatest threat to human health personally and collectively (32). The impact of this sense on parenting, family life nurture and the survival of trauma has been explored (33). Jung's use of archetypes, openness to mystery and emphasis on meaning can also be traced to curricular philosophy (34).

From within psychotherapy and beyond it, there emerges a sense that meaninglessness is a wound but that the process of finding meaning is also wounding. Heidegger's existentialism recognised both the power and the trauma of questing meaning.

Heidegger asks the question, "Why is there something instead of nothing?" (35). He stresses the ultimate importance of this question and believes that every human being is "grazed" more than once by the hidden power of it (36). Adolescents, at their Erikson stage of struggling between identity and isolation, may be particularly grazed by the loneliness and mystery of

human existence [37].

Heidegger allows different human responses to the question, which

> "may press hard on us, or... we may thrust it away from us and silence it" [38].

For some, the question is not part of everyday life, and it "gratifies no urgent or prevailing need" [39]. Forgetfulness of being is destructive and closes and hides being [40]; but we cannot escape from or forget the question, for it is the widest, deepest, and most fundamental of questions [41].

In addition, the human condition is to be curious and to wish to be in dialogue; and this condition leads to wounding when it fails or ends "in the desolation and silence of a one-sided dialogue" [42].

Another permutation of woundedness is provided by Robinson's research on transcendent spiritual experiences. Among the majority of positive experiences reported is a minority of experiences which brought fear, or in this case wounding, to the subject, not because of any denial or repression of the experience itself, but because of its inherent power:

> "When I was nearly five years old I would often cry bitterly at night, particularly when it was bellringing practice night, at the realization that some day my parents would die, and indeed the overwhelming knowledge that everything in the world would die some day. I found it an absolutely terrifying thought. I can still remember the feeling of utter desolation. Although I knew then that there was a life after death I was always so afraid that there would be a journey, a long, dark journey and people would perhaps get lost or too tired before they found Jesus" (43).

Terror before the questions, the power with which they shake and tear at human security, is a theme developed also in the dialogue between Judaism and psychotherapy (44). Woundedness, in this set of experiences, is not a deficit, but a human given and an opportunity for reflection. This theme is taken up by the writer on Christian ministry, Henri Nouwen (45). He describes human woundedness - including the minister's - as loneliness, and sees it as bring pain but also as a gift. In a startling metaphor, Nouwen likens human woundedness to the grand canyon,

> "a deep incision on the surface of our existence which has become an inexhaustible source of beauty and self-understanding" (46).

When religious learning takes account of woundedness, it directs learners towards autonomy and integration as whole persons; it accepts that learning must include facing the painful, bewildering questions of meaning. For some learners, the capacity to face

these questions may be slow or even arrested, and the religious faculties of the person traumatised. This trauma applies both to cognitive to affective processes. But the wound is there for all learners.

The wounding will take many forms. There will be those hurt by life in the broadest sense - by failures in relationships, by poverty, violence or disease, by disaster or fate; those hurt by change in society or in their faith community; those hurt in their religious development [47]; those liberated by learning, but hurt by how it marginalises them from their community. For such cases, and others, learning is not a cure; learning may indeed cause the wound to hurt more; but learning as an attending to the human wound will lead to healing.

A religious education which takes healing as its rationale and guiding metaphor is an educational process which attends to the causes of crippling and arrestment, both cognitive and affective; which listens compassionately to the trauma, which helps the learner to explore the causes, and which takes time to deal creatively with them. Also it is a process which builds up inner strength - a strength based on knowledge, understanding and personal development - towards the goal of the learner making healthy choices and avoiding unhealthy ones.

Using a therapeutic metaphor, we may therefore summarise the religious learner as *a wounded individual, in whom an acknowledgement of need and a discovery of depth of meaning appropriate to stage in life, will bring a process of healing.*

(ii) Teachers

The anthropology of the teacher is also important and needs definition in this model. Teachers, sharing the human condition of pupils, can acknowledge the wounded condition and can model acceptance and maturity in so doing.

Teachers share in the general woundedness of humanity. In addition, they may carry hurts which arise from their work, for instance in addressing ultimate questions, or in rejection and criticism within the educational or faith community (48).

The personal commitment of teachers in terms of religious content is still relevant (49). The character and maturity of the commitment are equally important (50). The teacher who has attended to her own healing and growth will foster those same priorities in learners both consciously and unconsciously, and in ways which transcend the divergence of old models (51).

A therapeutic model expects the teacher to have a personal engagement in the process at least equal to that which she expects of the pupils (52). This must include allowing herself, as a "leading learner" (53), to be called into question by the content, to be challenged by it at lifestyle and personal level, to change in accordance with its call, taking it in the context of her community. If teachers as role models are not prepared to learn from content in this holistic and complete way, we are unrealistic in setting it as an objective for pupils.

How the teacher handles both the woundedness and the personal engagement is another crucial anthropological feature. The right balance of personal engagement and professional detachment will be necessary. Nouwen's wounded Christian minister suggests a model:

> "While a doctor can still be a good doctor even when his private life is severely disrupted, no minister can offer service without a constant and vital acknowledgement of his own experiences" (54).

This acknowledgement should not be exhibitionist, but should balance a private, focused withdrawal and concentration with an equal spirit of community and sharing (55). As for ministers, so for teachers: we may paraphrase and develop Nouwen's rule by saying that *no religious educator can offer service without a constant*

and vital acknowledgement of, and attending to, her own religious woundedness, and that of all humanity including her pupils.

Bringing together the participant and the teacher, we may summarise a therapeutic anthropology by seeing all participants as *wounded individuals who help each other to find appropriate ways of acknowledging and attending to their woundedness through a search for a depth of meaning which will bring about a process of healing for themselves and others.*

(b) Epistemology

I focus on three ways in which a therapeutic metaphor can function to support an epistemology of religious education which is personal, spiritual and linguistically open.

(i) Knowledge as Personal

In Christian religious education, there is a shared feeling that the whole person is at the heart of the process, both in terms of its purpose and of its methodology (56). The whole person is strongly focused on in the work of Thomas Groome, with his concern for learning with head, heart and hand. This has again raised the language of wholeness into the consciousness of the Christian religious educator (57). A focus on

self-knowledge is emphasised as part of religious knowledge and knowledge of God in modern reform Jewish thinking (58).

In non-confessionalism, the emphasis is on finding educational justification in a philosophy of the curriculum which can include personal knowledge (59). This has sometimes been marginal in phenomenology (60) but there is, in curricular philosophy, a recognition of personal realms of knowledge and of their therapeutic possibilities (61).

In epistemology, there is the strong theme that knowledge itself relates not to faculties of a person, but to a whole person, so that some speak of holistic knowledge as knowing of wholes, a "grasping of disjointed parts into a comprehensive whole" (62). The religious significance of this way of knowing has been brought out clearly in the same period by Lonergan, whose model of knowledge is intimately associated with being (63).

Therapy offers a similar vision of knowing. The client moves from felt meanings (in other words, barely articulated or unrecognised feelings which affect the subject but are not named, let alone shared or placed in an intellectual framework) to articulated personal insights (in other words, truths about self or self in

relation to world which are seen, recognised and named, and placed into some analytical or intellectual framework) [64]. This process in therapy is analagous to the knowing and interpretation of religious experiences, especially the sort described by Hay [65]. This analogy may have wider potential for religious education. Insight in psychotherapy may be defined in ways which show its similarities to religious knowing. Both will relate to key events in personal development; both can be rational, but not like a scientific hypothesis; both are personally interpreted, and therefore variable between persons; both are accompanied by feeling; and both carry implications for behaviour [66]. Many of these characteristics, when applied to the pupil's reflective work in religious education, are highly appropriate and are seen in a limited form in, for instance, the Personal Search outcome of the 5-14 guidelines [67].

Psychology has also offered a suggestion of a similarity between apophatic knowledge, the way of unknowing or via negativa, and some aspects of personal knowing, such as acceptance of mystery or the learning to accept and live with events in the subject's past which cannot be undone [68]. This argument is not developed, however, and may be based on an experience more accessible to adults than to school-age children.

Watts and Williams argue that any religious insight having a basis in experience will have more personal consequences than mere intellectual insights. The strength of the behavioural consequences will be in proportion to the strength of emotional change. Further, attentiveness to the emotional changes in the self is a crucial factor in allowing behavioural outcomes to result (69). Two interesting similarities with Groome are apparent here. The first is with Groome's connection between epistemology and action; the second is Groome's use of the verb *attend to* (70) as a way of emphasising knowledge as an action of the whole personality.

The therapeutic concern with a balance between the rational and the emotive may be held in parallel with the educator's concern for a religious epistemology of head and heart (71). The suggestion of a balance between rational and emotive implies, for many, a restoration of the emotional domain to a place which it has been denied in western epistemology (72). Such a restoration would make possible the individual subject's apprehension of the object studied, be it an artefact, a belief or a person. This condition is important because it may deal with the inherent problem of reductionism - to mere facts or mere emotions - seen in phenomenological approaches.

Restoring and integrating the emotive realm of knowledge will encourage a bond of trust between knower (student) and known (religious object studied). This knowledge will be personal and mutual, an echo of Buber's subject-subject relationship; it has political implications in its ability to generate empathy [73]. The bonds of trust are like those between therapist and client; there is a similar spiral of developing confidence, and a similar empathy.

(ii) Knowledge as Spiritual

Perhaps the most fertile and detailed intermarriage of knowledge and healing comes from Donald Evans' spiritual interpretation of Erikson's stages of personality. Erikson posited growth through stages being marked by crisis moments which confront fears, resolve them, and allow the individual to move on and "grow together" being "more loving and relaxed, and brighter in his judgement" [74]. It was thus a therapeutic and a developmental scheme. Evans argues that:

> "... religion and morality and therapy can converge in stances which are central to human life as such" [75].

Evans takes Erikson's first stage, Trust vs Mistrust, and subdivides it into categories which carry

clear connotations of a spirituality appropriate for infants. The six constituent struggles within the struggle for trust are:

> Assurance *versus* Anxiety
> Receptivity *versus* Wariness
> Fidelity *versus* Idolatry
> Restraint *versus* Ruthlessness
> Hope *versus* Despair
> Passion *versus* Apathy (76).

On Fidelity *versus* idolatry, Evans notes how religion can be a form of idolatry:

> "a person does not stop being idolatrous by shifting his obsessive, possessive cravings from something finite and particular to something infinite and universal which he calls 'God'. There must be a change in basic attitude" (77).

In the same way, I suggest that religious education seeks not a change in the *content* of the child's faith, but rather a healthy, freeing and appropriate step forward or development in the child's *attitude to and relationship with* that faith-content, for instance in ways suggested by Fowler's stages of faith (78).

On Passion *versus* apathy, Evans defines apathy as a negative block on personal fulfilment and on the individual's dealings with others; passion enables the individual to say that:

> "the pervasive reality which unifies my world accepts the whole of me, including my distrust" (79).

This statement is, in its own language, a similar sentiment to that expressed in the explicit faith language of Psalm 23. Evans himself uses religious language, speaking of passion and passionate living as a generous state in which

> "the wine of life overflows to others from someone whose cup runs over" (80).

I feel that religious knowledge as a healing and developmental act of the whole personality is considerably strengthened by Evans' study. First of all, Evans' theological premise is that trust directed to people is identical with trust directed to God, since God is in people and since trust is fundamentally a state in relation to the universe, which is seen as reliable (81). What matters is the inner state; the state is then merely focused on individual people or on the divine being (82).

In its later stages, Evans' scheme of human personality development diverges from Erikson's while retaining the same dialectical and eight-fold structure. Evans makes growth in the attitude-virtues equivalent to growth in a religious and moral way of life leading towards human fulfilment (83).

Evans' contribution suggests a form of knowing which engages the whole being in a relationship *of the personality*, not only the cognitive domain, with objects which are all, ultimately, religious. Although Evans' argument has its weaknesses, it can be applied loosely to suggest that a converged model of religious education facilitates both the living relationship in communion favoured by confessionalists, and the autonomy insisted upon by non-confessionalists, fusing both these aspects in a new definition of the whole person's act of knowing. To these, Evans adds a spiritual dimension which fosters attitude-virtues leading to healing and growth.

(iii) The Language of Knowledge

The language of therapy is overwhelmingly subjective. Clients and carers alike are encouraged to speak about feelings rather than facts (84). My understanding of the reason for this is that it makes for dialogue. In conflict, feelings are an alternative to definite or dogmatic statements, and perceptions are considered safer than objective claims about the nature of another person's character or behaviour.

For Christian theology, the realm of the subjective has often been seen as a retreat or a failure, associated with the surrender of key doctrinal positions (85). It has been rare for Christian

dogmatics to speak in the same tone of voice as apologetics; even rarer to share basic methodologies with phenomenology. A striking exception is found in Smart's attempt to reconcile the use of the phenomenological method with Christian theology. In his work, he develops a "soft epistemology" (86) which allows for revealed doctrines but expresses them irenically and provisionally (87). What this method does is to allow the reality of a pluralist world its full impact on the inner structure of revelation and belief (88).

In a similar way, "falliblism" is offered by Alexander as an epistemic procedure in religious education. Falliblism suggests that although there may be sources of truth or goodness that lie beyond human consciousness, we have no way of conceiving them except by means of our intelligence; and our conceptions are often if not always flawed (89).

These procedures are of interest to me because, however their claims of success are evaluated, their language is broadly therapeutic: I note the openness to critical self-examination by a tradition (90), and the ability to foster attitudes of peace, alleviation of suffering, realism, self-esteem, changing emotions for the good, meaning, and vision (91).

When religious knowledge is held and expressed in the language of therapy, it is treated like the feelings of a client in therapy. It is sacred, personal, yet held with openness and subject to careful scrutiny. It encourages personal responsibility, humility, integrity and, when appropriate and possible, movement towards the positions held by others.

I summarise the epistemology of a therapeutic-metaphor model by describing religious knowledge thus: *the learner's knowledge is a balanced act of attentiveness, committing the whole person, including intellect, emotions and behaviour, which contributes to the subject's identity, healing and growth, and which is owned and expressed with humility and openness.*

(c) Religion

Religion, in all its miriad manifestations, cannot be fully analysed here. I cannot hope to lace all its phenomena into a therapeutic metaphor. Instead, I intend to outline how the metahor can understand religion positively, and to deal with what I see as the prime obstacle to the metaphor.

The essential characteristic of a religious education process based on a metaphor of therapy is that it must enable healthy growth, that is, it must

take care at every stage to induct learners into self-knowledge and self-acceptance. There must be a developmental criterion to every aim, piece of taught content, process and method. Erikson leaves me in no doubt of the high stakes involved in religious education when he insists that:

> "Whoever says he has religion must derive a faith from it which is transmitted to infants in the form of basic trust; whosoever claims that he does not need religion must derive such basic faith from elsewhere" (92).

The content of religious faith is less important than the form in which it is held. A therapeutic understanding of religious education is concerned not with promoting content (catechism), nor with changing it (evangelism), but with strengthening the learner to hold content healthily. This vision allows religious faith, moral character and personal fulfilment to be handled integrally. It allows all learners to participate and progress in something intrinsically human (93).

This universalist definition does not negate the importance of particular interpretations of religion. There may be certain interpretations which are incompatible with health and growth: fundamentalism might be an example (94); popular forms of religion in its broadest sense, such as consumerism or nationalism,

may fall outside the therapeutic scope if they offer minimal prospects for personal well-being. Also, a therapeutic metaphor would reject Freudian and some neo-Jungian explanations of religion as neurosis. The neo-Jungian conclusion that it is legitimate to see mysticism, insane delusions and the effects of various drugs as "one and the same" and merely described or "clothed" in different languages [95] amounts to a dismissal of religion as a pathology. These interpretations of religion have to be rejected because they cannot help the learner in religion to be well.

After these deletions, religion in a therapeutic metaphor can be defined as the set of beliefs and values encompassing individuals and communities, taking them beyond themselves and offering structured meaning. These encompass - surround, hold, and give direction to - individuals and communities; they are webs of meaning; they are more positive than negative; they exist plurally with variant language-worlds, but can be open to each other.

Certain aspects of religion lend themselves to this definition. Knowledge of God and self-knowledge are juxtaposed in Jung's thought, with the ego corresponding to humanity and the self - the encompassing whole - corresponding to Christ [96]. Given the complexity of Jung's thought, and subsequent

inadvisability of manufacturing straight equivalents, these work best as loose comparisons.

The experience of prayer will bear some therapeutic re-expression to the extent that it transforms the human subject. Watts and Williams describe it as a psychologically transforming process because it holds together and interweaves the primitive, immature human impulses with the adult and mature ones (97). Furthermore, they argue that psychotherapy is close to petitional prayer because both are a declaration of need and can have transforming effects for the individual subject (98).

The incarnational impulse in religion, which orients the believer towards social realities such as family life, education and the addressing of social ills, has a central place, corresponding to Smart's social and ethical dimensions (99). Understood in psychotherapy terms, this impulse is an encouragement to accept life objectively and confront reality rather than live in another world. It allows the individual subject to integrate personal religious beliefs and practices with the everyday world in which God is understood to be incarnated: such integration is healthy (100). This allows an earthed, non-dualistic interpretation of religion, opening the door to

liberative concerns which are discussed below. The doctrine of the incarnation forms one, but not the only, example of this impulse.

Arguably, God is an insurmountable obstacle to this definition. For members of faith communities, pupils or teachers, the transcendent deity is real and cannot be reduced or explained away; while for Buddhists and those outside any explicit religious tradition, there is no transcendent category deserving our attention. For the first category, God is named and non-negotiable; for the second, God can only be studied, and only as a concept mediated through someone else's experience. There is the added element of religionists for whom the way to God is exclusive, or for whom God is selective about who will be saved. God, therefore, forms an obstacle to a shared, pluralist understanding of religion as webs of meaning (101).

Accepting that the religion category, with its huge capacity for variant interpretations of religion, is the hardest of the three categories to define, I nevertheless use a therapeutic metaphor to summarise the object of religious education - the religious realities studied - as *the encompassing webs of meaning which exist within, between and beyond persons, incarnating, connecting, healing and transforming them, and pointing them towards a transcendent reality which*

is immeasurably powerful, good and ineffable.

4. Internal Dynamics of a Therapeutic Metaphor Model

(a) Teacher as Counsellor, Pupil as Client

How would a therapeutic metaphor apply in the classroom? My initial exploration of the idea assumed a teacher-counsellor, pupil-client metaphor, which has some similarities with Rogerian therapeutic and educational ideas, but also contains difficulties.

Carl Rogers' approach to counselling embraces aims and a language which are really educational. He links psychotherapy to education, seeing both as learning and healing processes toward the same end:

> "To my mind, the <u>best</u> of education would produce a person very similar to the one produced by the <u>best</u> of therapy" (102).

Rogerian thought identifies other resemblances, in methodology (103) and in the teacher's attentiveness to and care for the pupil (104).

In Rogers' documentation of his work, we find therapeutic models at work in the mind of the teachers (105). They rely on a "fundamental philosophy of belief in the potentiality of each student" similar to my positive anthropology (106). Work in groups - sometimes

called "encounter groups" or "keeping-current sessions" - could be emotionally charged [107] and could carry the risks of failure and trauma [108] but also offered riches of increase in self-esteem, insight and confidence [109]. The combination, or analogy, of client-centred therapy with person-centred education is aimed at producing, in theory, a person open to their own experience, living freely and responsibly [110]. Rogers reported positive student feedback for these methods [111].

Similar applications of therapeutic skills have been made by others in the contexts the teacher's handling of human relations and of community life [112], the teacher's skill in identifying psychiatric problems [113], and the child's maturation through personal education [114].

So far, this application of the metaphor confines itself to parallels between teacher and counsellor, and between pupil and client. Either education can bring about therapy, or else its methods are like those of therapy. These parallels have been identified by both educators and therapists. Religious education has not been singled out: but its personal character, its sacred subject matter and its estabished interest in spiritual development all make it an obvious laboratory for therapeutic relationships. Nevertheless, the model

as applied in this way has serious weaknesses.

(b) Objections to the Teacher-Counsellor, Pupil-Client Dynamic

The first weakness is anthropological. This application of the metaphor implies a deficit in pupils, and a superiority in teachers, at the level of their being: such an assumption is neither reasonable nor sufficiently open to be healthy (115).

Two further limits to this application of the therapy model are mainly anthropological, and fall into one of two categories, concerning the technical skills of teachers, and the perceptions of pupils.

Concerning the skills of teachers, a healing model of religious education cannot be taken all the way because teachers are not, by and large, trained as therapists. Teachers who go too deeply into therapeutic methods in a classroom context without training and skills, and without openly acknowledging and gaining permission for their procedure, may do damage to their pupils by misreading signals or mishandling emotionally charged situations.

Nevertheless, many teachers - although not counsellors - possess counselling skills, and will be able to deploy these skills appropriately in relation

to pupils and sensitive subject-matter.

Concerning the perceptions of pupils, a healing model of religious education cannot be applied in situations where learners are not seeking it and where the eventual aim is not therapeutic (116). Such a practice could have the very opposite of a therapeutic effect, for instance by over-exposing pupils' personal lives in the service of a process they did not freely choose.

Nevertheless, there will be some moments in the religious education curriculum when pupils may freely and knowingly choose a situation of personal sharing, in which case their perceptions will be similar to those of, say, an encounter group.

A final and conclusive objection becomes apparent when I consider the alternative application. To take the therapy model and apply it only to the relationship between teacher and pupil is to narrow the scope of the religious education process, leaving many other aspects - especially epistemology and the approach to religion - uninvolved in the metaphor. This objection leads me to consider an alternative way in which the therapy metaphor might be applied.

(c) Therapeutic Metaphor Applied to all Relationships in the Religious Education Process

When the metaphor is applied more widely, it becomes richer and more flexible in its application. The benefits of a therapeutic understanding of relationships will apply more widely and in a manner which, arguably, some thinkers have already prefigured (117).

(i) Learner as Therapist

The learner may adopt the metaphor of therapist because she listens to the religious text, probes it and challenges it. She is in sympathetic and respectful dialogue with it, and attempts to allow it to speak clearly. The learner may behave in the same way towards fellow-learners and the teacher. There is some similarity between this process and Dunne's concept of passing over and coming back (118).

(ii) Learner as Client

The learner may adopt the metaphor of client in the sense that he is in need of healing, wisdom, self-knowledge, self-esteem, challenge, insight, and an understanding of his options for behaviour and attitude. He may be able, if he chooses, to come as client to the religious text, to his fellow-learners, and to his teacher. The objections and caveats discussed above are important here. Dunne's passing-

over model is relevant here also, since the learner, on returning, must use the insights gained for an enriched understanding of his own life and as guidance for the future [119].

(iii) Teacher as Therapist

The teacher may adopt the metaphor of therapist because counselling skills are highly necessary in the process of giving advice, confronting problems, questioning the learner, and aiding the learner in a search for truth. The teacher may also model qualities of adulthood, including stability, self-acceptance, sense of boundaries, wisdom, and the ability to challenge - as well as the four attitudes of warmth, care, interest and respect identified by Rogers [120] as part of the counsellor's role. Many teachers have already found counselling skills to be invaluable in the competent prosecution of their duties. This role must be subject to the objections and caveats discussed above.

(iv) Teacher as Client

The teacher may achieve a self-understanding as client in the sense that she is committed to her personal journey of growth in relation to the wisdom offered by the religious traditions studied. She is not a cool professional, handling the religious truths as

casually as one may deal out cards; she is, in Groome's phrase, a leading learner [121], standing humbly in relation to the religious traditions and, where appropriate, in relation to the learners. She acknowledges and models her humble and life-changing approach to religion, her commitment to her own healing and that of her learners, her openness to change and to the transcendent. She does so without manipulation or exhibitionism. This role cannot be forced on the teacher. It must be willingly adopted as a guiding metaphor.

(v) Religion as Therapist

The religious tradition studied may impact on participants in a way that can be metaphorically understood as therapy. This is so because of the inherent power of its beliefs, practices, symbols, texts and other phenomena. Those aspects of the religion may be understood to act as therapist because they will challenge, enlighten and help the willing learner to seek healing in his human condition. They will provide the wherewithal for the sense of meaning to which Jung points as an essential ingredient of mental health. Behind all the religions stands the active agent, the transcendent other (God), whose purpose is believed to be benign. The old confessional tradition places much emphasis on the capacity of

religious education to bring the learner closer to God or Christ. This insight becomes part of the therapy metaphor, not only in relation to study of Christianity, but in relation to the encounter with the ineffable through all the major world faiths. The transcendent other who is behind the faiths may also, when encountered, help learners towards knowledge and acceptance of self; the goal of Jungian individuation may equivalate to coming face to face with the ultimate.

(vi) Religion as Client

The religion studied may also be approached metaphorically as client in the sense that it is subject to analysis by the learner and teacher. Learner and teacher collaborate to challenge the religious tradition - which is fallible and wounded [122] - towards a greater integrity by asking it questions, by drawing attention to its defects and inconsistencies, and by listening to it (through its texts or human representatives) as it clarifies its position. The questioning will be rigorous, but the listening will be sympathetic and, as in nearly all therapy, respectful of the client's dignity.

This application of the metaphor allows a process which can subsume non-confessional study of religion because of the rigorous and open nature of the

encounter. It can also subsume confessional nurture because of the personal nature of the encounter. When the metaphor is applied equitably to all relationships in the learning process, a mutually supportive web of concern for health and truth develops and strengthens the project.

5. Liberative Theologies Metaphor for a Converged Model: Precedents

Liberation theology may serve as a source for a new converged model of religious education because of its concerns with the realisation of justice and self-determination, hope, visions and dreams. Much of the realisation is inspired, shared, built up and celebrated through processes which can be called educational. Above all, freedom as a value becomes enormously important during the adolescent period, and has its roots in levels of autonomy experienced during infancy and childhood. Liberative education can celebrate freedom both in its negative sense - freedom from - and in its positive - freedom for (123). This introduces a political goal for education.

As I search for precedents, I realise that the many associated movements in liberation theology need to be defined and brought together with an identity. Mary Grey describes the theologies which

share this approach as "transformational theologies" and includes under this heading the political liberation theologies (black, Latin American, Asian and Afro-Caribbean), ecological, feminist and womanist theologies, gay theology, and mujerista theology, among others [124]. She omits the use of Marxist thought and the development of British and European liberation theologies, all of which are important and are included in my discussion. Feminist theologies have particular promise because of their "capacity for the interlinking of as yet unnamed oppressions" [125] and because they have worked more on spirituality in ways which may connect liberation theology to my other metaphor, healing.

I propose to unite these movements, together with others "as yet unnamed", and to define them together as liberative theologies. I chose the word *liberative* both to avoid partial misunderstandings over the word liberation (which for some has meanings only in the political-economic contexts of southern continents) and also to explore and emphasise the underlying active purpose which unites them and which should inspire religious education. I chose the plural term *theologies* to emphasise their diversity. I believe that not only the content, but also the method of these liberative theologies should feature in a new metaphor of

religious education.

Liberation theology in its Latin American, political-economic sense is historically prior to many of the other liberative theologies. Born out of social conditions and the critical reflection on them, liberation theology conceived itself as an educational process, and quickly added new social considerations to religious education. Jacques Audinet, a participant at the 1968 Conference of Latin American bishops in Medellin, defined catechesis as

> "the means by which any section of human society interprets its own situation, sees it, and expresses it in the light of the Gospel" (126).

His definition brings into play social and economic forces, and at the same time is, in its tone, redolent of the see-judge act process of the Cardijn movements, and of the describing process of phenomenology.

Where religious education has encountered liberation theology, it has been deeply affected. The American tradition of connecting religious education with liberation issues may be traced back to the social gospel of at the start of the twentieth century (127). The encounter has led to new definitions of religious education as awakening, a process seen as parallel to

conscientisation, and as emerging creativity [128]. Freire's literacy work and subsequent pedagogical thought [129] is also influential. The end result is a vision of religious education set firmly in a developmental and social context which radicalises the confessional approach [130]. Not only society, but also the language of faith, and models of theology such as the "deposit of truth", will be transformed by progressive social forces [131]. For some in the church, such a use of religious education would amount to the pedagogical tail wagging the theological dog, and would thus be unacceptable. Nevertheless, the approach has recommended itself to other thinkers and worked its way into their definitions, particularly Groome [132] and Butkus [133].

Unsurprisingly, national contexts of direct domination and struggle have generated some religious education programmes and theories which pick up liberative themes [134].

There has been little similar work in the British context. Martin Palmer's work on textbooks which raise environmental concerns represents a critical and useful reflection on a related and crucial area [135]. While environmental concerns are often seen as distinct from, and sometimes as in conflict with liberative ones, Palmer's approach - particularly his support for

critical openness and plurality - ensures that his work is harmonious with liberative concerns. My discussion of liberative anthropology shows how environmental concerns and desires for peace and justice form a unity in children's minds.

Some Roman Catholic resources [136] represent a systematic attempt to build some liberative and open dynamics into confessional school-based programmes. I count the success of these resources in inaugurating liberative themes and procedures on the basis of their capacity to raise issues [137].

The interest of the feminist movement in education is long-standing. Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg on moral development [138] initiated a movement of interest in spirituality, morality and psychotherapy from a feminist perspective. The emphasis is usually on the silencing of girls as a socialisation into roles as object, sole carer or victim [139].

While much of the precedent for a liberative way of understanding religious education originates in American movements, there is also a significant voice in Europe and a collection of evidence for global concern and reflection, making this a rich source for a metaphor. The religious traditions themselves also carry strong and ancient liberative strains, one of

which is developed under Religion below.

6. Philosophy of a Converged Model Based on a Liberative Theologies Metaphor

(a) Anthropology

Anthropology for a liberative religious education naturally focuses on the human interest in freedom, but must deal with several critical issues. What insights can be had into the social nature and context of the learner? What account can be given of human weakness? To what extent can such insights be consistent with theological traditions? And how can this anthropology be applicable in wealthy countries?

The social nature of humanity, and the social context of education, are widely accepted themes going back to Aquinas (140) and embracing radical Latin American educators (141). Secular liberal educational thought has embraced the social dimension with less enthusiasm, but still recognised its relevance (142). These traditions share little more than their themes of the common good and the possible desirability of collective aims in education: it remains to identify insights about humanity which can support a liberative metaphor.

While it cannot be said of all human beings that they are oppressed, or oppressors, poor or rich, revolutionary or reactionary, it can be argued that the human interest in freedom is a universal trait. Freire's work makes this a major theme. He has not directly addressed anthropology in my sense; however, he suggests an anthropology which is both optimistic and realistic, both deeply religious and expressed in humanist, neo-Marxist terms. My liberative anthropology is based on characteristics of freedom and responsibility, critically developing the work of Freire and others.

At the outset of the thesis, I identified themes affecting the young (143). I included developmental insights which attempt to explain and chart the individual's quest for freedom; I made mention of the spectrum of concerns - environmental, nuclear and spiritual - on which the young wish to be responsible and to urge others to responsibility. Freedom and responsibility, however, amount to more than a current ethical concern among the young of one generation: they are also a built-in anthropological characteristic.

Freedom is both the destiny and the quest of the human learner. The opposite of freedom in historical-social terms is object status, in which full humanity is unachievable. The fullness of being demands freedom.

The destiny of human beings, for Freire, is to be responsible subjects, overcoming fear of freedom and object status, and achieving a control of their own history (144). Freedom has a status not only as a social and individual goal, but as an ontological or anthropological characteristic, giving motivation and providing aspects of character. It is fundamental to the human *dharma* or vocation (145).

Freedom as a quest means that the human learner seeks, experiences and can enjoy freedom in partial and developing ways while understanding itself as on a journey towards a fuller freedom. The quest often takes the form of a struggle. Freire understands struggle as the effort of the oppressed to liberate themselves, and their oppressors, from exploitative systems. Struggle begins with critically recognising the causes of oppression (146). Education is crucial in the struggle because of its capacity to aid recognition. Both the struggle and the liberative form of education require faith (147). Not to engage in the quest, not to prosecute the struggle, is to be less than fully human. Even when conflict is inherent in struggle, people must fight for their emancipation. The quest or struggle transcends the self, leading to external and internal change. Shirking the struggle means betraying human historical nature (148).

The fear of freedom is not only a brake on liberation movements but also an existential, ontological crisis which human communities must confront. The Exodus experience, theologically interpreted, narrates a psychological and political overcoming of the fear of freedom which has its climax at the red sea shore:

> "When Pharaoh, King of Egypt, was told that the people had made their escape, he and his courtiers changed their minds about the people.... So the Egyptians gave chase and came up with them where they lay encamped beside the sea.... The sons of Israel were terrified and cried out to Yahweh. To Moses they said, 'Were there no graves in Egypt that you must lead us out to die in the wilderness? What good have you done us, bringing us out of Egypt? We spoke of this in Egypt, did we not? Leave us alone, we said, we would rather work for the Egyptians! Better to work for the Egyptians than die in the wilderness!' Moses answered the people, 'Have no fear! Stand firm... Yahweh will do the fighting for you: you have only to keep still.' " (149).

Freire's analysis of the fear of freedom is astute and comparable:

> "... the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires.... They prefer gregariousness to authentic comradeship; they prefer the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the very pursuit of freedom." (150).

The theme of longing and complaint accompanied by

hesitation and calculation is touched on in theological reflection about Scotland's historical and contemporary struggle for national identity (151) and is a frequent topic in popular debate. Fear forms a major concept in the liberative anthropology's account of human weakness.

Freedom as destiny and as struggle, and the fear of freedom as the deficit from which humanity can be saved, form central features of a liberative anthropology. But to what extent can these be theologically accepted in the confessional tradition?

In its internal structure, this anthropology resembles aspects of Christianity's analysis of the human condition. There is a deficit, a way out of it, a conversion and death to old ways of (educational and political) thinking; there are implicit values of love and fullness of life. These bear a natural affinity with religious life, and in Freire's case they are traceable to religious roots (152). In addition, it can be shown how the entire liberation theology movement takes human history as the crucible of salvation, seeing the drama of Christ acted out in contemporary settings (153). Some theologians welcome *rapprochements* between the churches and progressive secular movements (154).

Despite its theological possibilities, liberative religious education cannot ignore the cultural gap between third-world and British contexts. For instance, to view the Scottish school pupil as oppressed raises serious questions about comparative economic and political injustices, and about the concept of oppression in a child's experience. Freire wrote from his own experience working with oppressed adults in political economies of the third world.

Some liberative themes from third-world contexts are transferable. There are central anthropological insights about the human destiny and vocation to be fully human and free. Oppression dehumanises the oppressor as much as the oppressed; struggle is a human vocation and a state of solidarity and consciousness. Religious education can be a process calling young learners to be fully human, to love freedom as a goal for themselves and all others, and to value knowledge and consciousness of the social and ideological forces which bind them. It can be a subject whose everyday patterns of learning strive to realise and celebrate a belief that learners are most human, and therefore most fulfilled as learners, when they are most free.

Specifically first-world perspectives may also be added to the anthropology. Hull's concern about the spirituality and power of money is an example. Hull

uses the Gramscian concept of hegemony to describe the dominating role of money in society and in the imagination and existential life of people (155). To a certain extent, this argument implies that western humanity, including the young, has already become *Homo Economicus*. But he also wishes to argue that this is not the full truth of humanity, and he looks to the content of religious and spiritual education for an alternative narrative. The way in which the identity of religions might be deployed in this struggle is dealt with below under Religion.

Anthropology for a liberative religious education may be summed up in the principle that *pupils in the western world are caught up in a global net of exploitation and oppression which, whether they themselves are rich or poor, diminishes them* and furthermore that *pupils, teachers, their families and communities find the highest expression of their humanity in a love and struggle for freedom and responsibility as goals for themselves and all others.* This vision of humanity, briefly stated, forms the anthropological base for a liberative metaphor of religious education.

(b) Epistemology

Central to a liberative religious epistemology is the power to do two things: to recognise the present and to imagine the future.

Recognition of the present needs the power to apprehend external realities, name them, understand how one has internalised them, and separate oneself from them. Praxis must form a part of this definition (156). This knowledge process must be unitary and to some extent provisional, moving at the pace appropriate to the individuals or communities who are engaged in recognising their own present. If the process is divided artificially between the teacher and the learner, or if the pace is set by outsiders, the liberative character of the knowledge is seriously compromised (157). This raises some fundamental questions about applicability in the context of nationally set curricular and examination courses, which I deal with below.

A liberative epistemology usually sees knowledge as discovered through the raising of issues and asking of questions. Planning is necessary, and the teacher of children will wish to use her skill and understanding to prepare appropriate issues in accessible ways, thus helping the learner to name and understand their

reality (158).

For traditional religious education, of whatever model, the opposite of knowledge has usually been ignorance, or perhaps apathy or prejudice; but in a liberative metaphor, it is a state of misperception and misreading of reality (159) in which the subject may have all the same cognitive data available as an authentic knower, but will draw out starkly different conclusions and lifestyle choices which are not oriented towards liberation. Critical awareness and commitment are the measure of knowledge.

By this measure, the most marginalised learners, having the least to lose, may become the most critically aware (160). This form of knowledge will, therefore, implicitly subvert more established, informational ones. It will recount narratives of weakness and failure, promoting compassion and criticism of the present by listening attentively to those who are marginalised in the classroom, school, community and world. Feminist educators have shown how even this act of attending and listening can be political (161). Other sources (162) have accepted subversion as a positive educational goal.

Liberative knowing is both political and psychological: it can involve a freeing of the subject

from inward emotional reactions of fear, inferiority or submission as well as manifest political behaviour (163).

The power to imagine the future - including transcendent possibilities which break into the subject's personal and political history - forms a second vital strand of liberative religious knowing. This creative, imaginative form of knowledge usually has its roots in the first form, critical understanding of the present, so that things-as-they-are may be contrasted critically with things-as-they-might-be.

A liberative epistemology can broaden out its definition of knowing so that it includes not only a critical stance of naming evils (164) but also an active creation of a future (165) and a making of connections (166), with its liberative power to see political causes and effects synoptically. Feminism has identified the telling of stories, both fictional and biographical, as a form of knowledge resisting oppression (167). The use of the imagination and the involvement of the whole person bring in psychotherapeutic themes of health, wholeness and openness to others, reminiscent of the previous metaphor (168).

I have already indicated ways in which the present education system would be in conflict with this theory

because of its independent pace and direction and its focus on the narratives of the weak. Furthermore, the question of the appropriateness of a political form of knowing must be raised in a British context where levels of oppression are very much in dispute and not as explicit as in third-world contexts [169]. If the applicability rests on the individual's political analysis of Britain, it will remain contestable, and will therefore fail to provide consensual grounding for application of liberative epistemology. There is also the question of the appropriateness for children of a system designed for work with adults: do children perceive, know, and fall prey to false consciousness in the same way as adults, and can they be stimulated into consciousness and praxis through generative themes and dialogue alone? There is evidence to suggest that Freire believes so [170], but this remains largely untried in British and Scottish contexts.

The central applicable element is, I believe, the critical praxis orientation of knowledge, much of which has already been claimed for religious education by Groome [171]. Liberative knowing becomes so intimately connected with the person's being and actions that it becomes a state of awareness of the whole being in relation to religious, social, emotional and power realities. If Scottish pupils experience a religious

education which opens up in them this wide band of consciousness, they will be freed to make connections, and to understand their knowledge and experience within and across several categories, in precisely the way Freire intends for his literacy participants.

A liberative way of knowing in religion may, therefore, be summed up as *the whole person's consciousness, expression and praxis of a critical journey away from alienation and towards a transcending, imagined, historically realiseable, just and peaceful future.* This way of knowing emphasises the agency of the whole being and the investment in action, mindful that - *pace* Marx - religious educators so far have merely interpreted the world and its religions: the point remains to transform them and ourselves.

(c) Religion

In liberative religious education, religious traditions and experiences are accepted as existentially real aspects of human experience which have the power to transform history. As with much liberation theology in its Latin American and other third-world contexts, the questions of doctrine and of the reliability of texts, and other matters central to European theology of the twentieth century [172], are of lesser importance in a liberative view, because the

chief interest is in historical and social contexts where human freedom is at stake.

The liberative metaphor's understanding of religion adopts this engagement with historical and social reality, and the consequent lesser engagement with classical European doctrinal and textual issues, as an important characteristic. Two examples serve to illustrate how religion is handled liberatively. Segundo explains and defends the choice of method in liberation theology thus:

> "From its very inception liberation theology was a theology rising out of the urgent problems of real life. Faced with those problems and deeply influenced by them, it resorted to the traditional means of theologizing: that is, to biblical tradition and to dogmatic tradition... In affirming certain essential points, moreover, it left aside other points which may have been important in their consequences." (173)

In one of the most powerful passages of liberative theological writing, Koyama pictures the mutilated Christ who challenges bureaucracies, technologies and idolatry in religious and political power structures; Koyama's style is narrative, and does not stop to debate the historical certitude of Christ's death, nor the doctrinal definition of his identity and role (174).

Liberative theologies usually see their task as

the expression of hope in concrete situations. For instance, Gutierrez' definition of theology's central problem makes this clear. For him, the question of the relationship between salvation and historical human liberation, while differently stated in various periods, is *the* question and is intimately related with the content and meaning of being a Christian today (175). Some liberative educators do address the place and status of religion as a discipline, in an attempt to break out of dominant catechetical modes and emphasise educational processes (176).

Religion, then, is understood in historical and social contexts. It is positively manifested as the subversive strength of ideas, teachings, interpreted experiences, and practices whose source is independent from the hegemonic ideas of money and power and whose message challenges established values. There is no lack of Christian theologians who interpret all or parts of their own tradition in this subversive way (177).

It would take too long, and be distracting, to list all the manifestations of religion as a subversive, transcending resource. Instead, one liberative theme is developed from two religions, with an interest in its capacity to raise issues connected with liberative theologies.

A central liberative concept of the Judaeo-Christian tradition is that of Jubilee, with its call to liberation and reconciliation. The founding texts for the Jubilee concept span Jewish and Christian scripture and allow the idea to evolve (178). The values expressed therein, urging rest not only for family but for servants and strangers, and care for animals, may be connected with the freedom values inherent in the drama of struggle and liberation in Egypt (179). Jubilee is thus established as a theme belonging at the very heart of the Jewish and subsequently the Christian story.

Jubilee addresses a considerable swathe of issues including letting the land lie fallow, forgiving debts, freeing captives, seeking justice for the oppressed, and celebrating ritually with a feast (180). Among the issues which would resonate with Jewish hearers of third Isaiah, or of Jesus of Nazareth, are the political economy, social attitudes, policies on punishment, family and domestic life, the shared sense of identity as a chosen and worshipping people, and the sense of immediate and future social and Messianic expectations. These issues not only cover much of ancient Israel's political and spiritual life; they also strike at the heart of the most urgent and most hotly debated problems in contemporary western

societies. Therefore, not only do the Jubilee *mitzvot* cohere as a central element of two religious traditions; they also represent a strong candidate for a generative theme in contemporary liberative religious education.

Maria Harris interprets Jubilee as a source for radical spirituality [181] but it may also be applied educationally. Topics associated with Jubilee - third-world debt, the environment, treatment of prisoners, human rights, worship - are becoming common in religious education; but Harris' five-fold cyclical process [182] can itself be educational.

The first two steps, fallowness and forgiveness, may be interpreted educationally and pastorally as processes of achieving emptiness, openness and renewal of vision, essential to both psychological well-being and political justice. The third and fourth steps, freedom for captives and seeking justice, involve both the discovery of information and praxis. The cycle closes with ritual celebration, historically a central part of Jewish and Christian education, and in itself a source of fresh insights, allowing the cycle to begin again.

In this way, the Jubilee theme lends itself to a process of reflection, discovery, action and

celebration, in which liberative and dialogical learning can takes place. Jubilee thus provides not only a generative theme and content, but also a dynamic of education which may be said to be anciently pre-Freirian and to carry the hallmarks of a religious education for liberation. Although it contains the ancient catechetical hallmark of ritual, it is nevertheless very different from the dominant catechetical mode of information-giving, and represents a more dynamic deployment of religious content.

Religion also possesses oppressive features, either as part of a particular tradition or in its contemporary function as an ideology supporting oppressive structures (183). My therapeutic metaphor identified how religious traditions can be wounded or disfigured (184) and I add the oppressive behaviour of religion in certain contexts as a reality to be apprehended. Oppressive features can be treated as issues worthy of examination and therefore part of the learner's critical understanding of the overall entity of religion. In most cases, the mere raising of the issue in an open-ended way constitutes a liberative act, since the conservative elements in a religious tradition would usually prefer the issue not to be raised (185).

A liberative view of religion is selective and critical in its dealings with traditions, claiming the right - from its own social context of oppression - to emphasise some themes and to reject others. This right is exercised by liberative theologians (186), and can and should form a part of every theological thinker's reflective capacity. A liberative understanding of religion will, therefore, transform religion.

So far my discussion has focused mainly on religious traditions; but human religion in general, or spirituality, may also be treated liberatively in its historical context. A contemporary and relevant example of this is to be found in the discussion of spiritual development as a requirement in schools, and the underlying conflicts between definitions of spirituality as private and as communal (187). A liberative metaphor understands spirituality as inter-personal, scandalously particular in time and place, and accepting of life in the raw, including conflict and pain. Aspects of individual spirituality and religious experience such as peak experiences should also be included, both for their powerful reality and for their ability to transform situations (188).

Religion, then, may be understood as *the transcending insights of traditions and individuals in historical and social contexts, displaying both*

positive (liberating) and negative (ideological, alienating) characteristics at various times. This understanding of religion leaves aside several issues of conflict between religious studies and theology, such as the human or divine origin of traditions, relative truth-claims, exclusivity and revelation; but - as discussed above - these issues are not of primary concern from the point of view of the oppressed.

7. Internal Dynamics of a Liberative Theologies Metaphor

(a) Pupils Critically Examining and Understanding their Experience

In liberative education, learners transform the world by naming it [189]. In my metaphor, the world transformed is the immediate world of the child's experience, both outward (encompassing political realities in family, friendship circles, school and beyond) and inward (the world of feelings and expectations). Below, I suggest the adolescent's body as one possible hermeneutical starting-point for this critical engagement.

Freire's pedagogy has participants using generative themes [190] such as domination and liberation, as a way of inaugurating their education. Freire's themes are generated through conversational

openings designed to pose a problem and expose and name subjective and objective realities in the group [191]. In the context of religious work with school-age children, generative themes may need more preparation by the teacher, but they must remain themes of which the learners feel sure they have ownership. With some children, themes may be generated through the reflective use of questions like 'Is there something in the news worrying a lot of us at the moment?', 'Why should we be concerned about ... ?', 'What are the biggest threats to your future?' or 'What do you want to ask of/say to the church/mosque/synagogue?' Freire is aware of the difficulties of applying the method, especially in first-world institutions where students and colleagues are not accustomed to it [192]. In schools, the difficulties are not likely to be less great: children would receive confusing signals about their expected involvement and would inevitably fail, through lack of familiarity and skill, to take full advantage of the new method. In some cases they might feel threatened by it.

The exploration of these themes, determined always by teacher and participants in dialogue, gives not only a direction to their education but also a sense of meaning to their universe. A religious education process based on this approach will help pupils to

identify shared existential themes, to reflect on them, and to make critical, questioning connections with their own and others' religious and moral practices. Something of this process is indicated by Grimmitt's construction of an adolescent religious life-world curriculum (193). This will, however, be oriented not always to the study of specific religions, but to the naming and understanding of religious and other realities in their context.

(b) Pupil and Teacher Questioning Each Other

A liberative metaphor sees pupil and teacher in critical dialogue. Sometimes this will be about topics which usually remain hidden or forbidden, such as the teacher's own authority and the way this affects their relationship in the classroom. Even in safer topics, the dialogue is critical and open. This means that the teacher finally gives up any automatic status, relying instead on the process of critical encounter as an education in itself. The educational option for the poor, discussed earlier (194), requires that the pace and the focus of attention is to a considerable extent determined by the weakest, with all that that may imply for loss of curricular control. This changed relationship, radically uncomfortable though it will be to many teachers (and pupils), is necessary if the

liberative process is to take off and free religious education from models of clerical, adult, or employer domination [195].

(c) Pupil and Teacher Questioning the Structures of School, Community, Religions, Church and Society

So far, the use of generative themes identifies and names the experience of learners in dialogue with their teachers. As and when injustices are discovered and understood, they must be questioned if the liberative dynamic is to have any purpose. In one sense, to name forms of oppression is already to question and confront them [196] but young learners need to gain appropriate, developing experiences in the verbal questioning of injustices. The same engagement can take place with cultural values [197].

Critical interaction with is also necessary with the church. whether pupils are part of that faith community or not. A young person is usually one of the poor in the church, in the sense of having little power over language and rules. In Roman Catholicism this is especially the case with girls. Liberative religious education listens to, and takes account of, the voices of the poor in the church and other faith communities, and fosters a re-evaluation of theology and practice at all levels of the faith community in the light of what they say [198].

(d) Pupil and Teacher Living Out their Commitment in Praxis

Liberative religious education respects the praxis cycles of action and reflection used in base communities and other contexts [199] and therefore envisages action in the community as an essential part of the process. It is more common in the confessional sector to find some (usually apolitical) forms of community service included in religious education programmes for pupils aged 16 to 19, but these must be elevated to the level of action which generates questions and feeds reflection.

Praxis in the community leads to critical reflection on a new situation, making this dynamic cyclical like others. Where possible, schools and classes use ritual celebration to mark this cycle.

8. The Therapeutic-Liberative Metaphor

Up to now, I have developed the metaphors separately in order to establish their relevance; but I believe that they complement and balance each other in important ways. Connections exist between the inner world of healing and the external world of liberation, and these can be developed to form one metaphor.

The woundedness of the human condition is seen, in the biblical tradition, as something which will be healed by the Messiah as liberator, who will set captives free and heal the broken hearts (200), a function both therapeutic and liberative. Insight and response are described similarly in both contexts (201). Patterns of crisis, death, rebirth, growth and transformation are common to both (202). Shared epistemological concerns exist, particularly in regard to personal knowledge.

As well as supporting each other, the two metaphors can be mutually critical in a way that is constructive for religious education. Any tendency in the therapeutic world towards individualism may be checked by the liberationist interest in community; any liberationist tendency towards harshness and confrontation may be checked by the therapeutic focus on the integrity of persons. Such mutual criticism already takes place at a theological level (203) and can be developed into a dialogue of metaphors, each metaphor helping to bring the best out of the other.

The inner and external balance offered by a partnership of therapeutic and liberative metphors allows the educator to pursue several pairs of values usually held in tension, as follows:

Therapeutic metaphor	Liberative metaphor
Security	Solidarity
Love	Truth
Peace	Justice
Autonomy	Commitment
Individual	Community
Excellence	Equality

Doubtless, other pairs of values could be pursued in this partnership. Integration into a single metaphor helps to ensure fullness and balance in religious education, deterring educators or communities from placing undue emphasis on values or methods associated with one side at the expense of the other.

The starting point of therapeutic-liberative religious education is the experience of the learner. This is so because in both psychotherapy and liberation theology, the experience - of the client, of the poor - is the prime text to be understood critically (204). From this critical understanding, things can be learned, expressed and acted on, in relation to internal and external reality, thus bringing about some measure of transformation in individual and society.

For instance, Athaus-Reid claims that the feminine body is a proper place to begin a hermeneutic

of criticism against patriarchal systems of thought (205). Applying this kind of hermeneutic in the R.E. context, the adolescent's body can be the starting-point for therapeutic-liberative religious education. This body is changing rapidly, unfamiliar and unreliable to the self; it may also be suffering from violence, abuse or malnourishment, or from more hidden injustices such as fatigue from the paid job, or anorexia from emotional neglect. It is a symbolic focus of inward uncertainties and outward conflicts. There is great potential, in this body, for reflection leading to challenge and change.

The following four examples of R.E. activity are not new paradigms, but examples of how religious education processes which are already happening can be understood using the therapeutic-liberative metaphor, and can be developed so that therapeutic-liberative aspects become more pronounced.

Example (a): Life Themes with 5 Year Olds

Themes in the infant's experience include friendship, disappointment, loss or bereavement, pain and injustice, joy, and fear. Using a story or a real-life experience can lead pupils to share similar experences, to name them and ask questions about them. This performs therapeutic and liberative functions

which are beneficial for the child at that age, and essential for later awareness of self and others. The experiences of sharing stories and feelings in a group, of listening and telling, and of understanding something of one's self in an accepting environment, are therapeutic in themelves, and they also teach the infant to trust therapeutic processes in the future. Among other essential liberative skills, it delivers the ability to listen and make connections, to name experiences accurately and prophetically, to have compassion, to ask questions, thus fostering a way of knowing feelings and using group action, and teaching the infant to trust communal situations in later life.

Example (b): Natural Beauty with 9 Year Olds

Guided meditation can offer pupils the chance to enter an imagined place of natural beauty. This not only promotes awareness of natural beauty and knowledge of environmental issues - in themselves valid cognitive outcomes - but also provides enjoyment and refreshment, renewal of the person and expression of feelings - equally valid affective outcomes replicating some of the values of jubilee discussed above. Renewal of the individual may be understood in therapeutic terms in that it contributes to mental and emotional well-being; raising environmental issues may be understood in liberative terms in that it

challenges lifestyles and economic systems.

Example (c): Islam with 14 Year Olds

Hearing the voices of Muslims raised in protest against western lifestyle can not only deepen the pupils' understanding of Islam but can also improve their ability to ask themselves awkward questions, to monitor themselves, and to make healthy choices. This challenges young people, at a sensitive stage in their maturation, to reflect deeply on who they are and who they might become through the influence of their surroundings and through the consequences of their own lifestyle choices. Space in which to question oneself and to understand Islam critically and gently can be therapeutic both for the learner and for Islam. Liberative questions are also raised, such as prejudice, injustice, the legacy of the imperial period and the spiritual needs of western consumer society. Generating questions about western values and about the position of women in Islam is an essentially liberative pedagogy.

Example (d): Anger with 18 Year Olds

Getting pupils to talk about what makes them angry can lead on to helping them to name the causes of their anger - e.g. difficult relationships, blatant injustices in their school, immediate community or wider society. The moral issues thus raised will then

be understood not only theoretically but also existentially and in a way which touches the pupils' lives. This activity works therapeutically because the expression of feelings such as anger, and the hearing of this from others, teaches emotional literacy, perspective, love of truth, responsibility and self-awareness. It has clear liberative possibilities, not only in raising the issues but also in delivering skills of analysis in unjust situations.

9. Questions and Tasks Remaining

My argument has been that the old models are unsatisfactory, full convergence between them is unlikely, and a therapeutic-liberative metaphor should break through. If this is to happen, further work is necessary in some areas.

A new metaphor cannot be introduced with a complete break from the old. Aspects of the old models' attempts to reach each other are important bequests to the new metaphors. These attempts include Hill's impartial-exemplary study, envisioning open, empathetic study of various faiths in the secure context of a school with shared values (206); Arthur's interpolation vehicle, with his warning that the lifetime study of religion requires patience, care and

sustained travelling time [207]; and Watson's attack on secularism, with its implied call for a positive engagement with movements which question consumerism and which attempt to raise awareness of human rights, environmental awareness and the spiritual dimension [208]. These and other theorists, influential in the movement towards convergence, have a part in shaping the future.

The extent to which the therapeutic-liberative metaphor satisfies the needs and beliefs of confessional educators requires further reflection. At the outset of this chapter, I identified a peaked and declining rate of confessional participation, and a divided confessional community, as some of the reasons why present patterns could not be expected to produce full convergence. Is there any better hope in the new metaphor? This depends in part on the interpretation of central theological concepts such as the reign of God, revelation, sin and judgement. Can such concepts be brought into further dialogue with the worlds of psychotherapy and liberation? Also, dialogue with conservatives in the confessional tradition is urgently needed. The major obstacle here is likely to be over the nature of religion, religious knowledge and faith, and over the extent to which they may be seen in existential, affective, symbolic terms, or in

propositional ones [209]. Another factor is the way in which the metaphor is applied, and the extent to which denominational school contexts would be free to make it their own. This raises structural issues around church schools and their place in an education system; these are beyond my scope, but it seems rational to add my view that a therapeutic-liberative metaphor would be strange indeed if it could not countenance some local autonomy for parents and faith communities, and if it could not be adapted to their processes.

The non-confessional tradition, whether phenomenological, experiential or other, will also need to be in dialogue. Here I expect the epistemological questions to be the most difficult. Minority faith communities, and parents, may also express reservations.

I have argued that the therapeutic-liberative metaphor subverts the school. Is it possible, and realistic, for schools to accommodate this development? Could schools follow the pattern set by therapeutic-liberative religious education, and become therapeutic, freeing communities? The political and psychological obstacles are mighty, and the possibilities of failure are great [210]. The anthropological assumptions are probably not widely enough shared yet.

The transformation in the teacher's role forms the last, and perhaps the most serious of the remaining questions. Will the teacher have the willingness and skill to manage classroom situations in which the unusual is asked of them, for instance in sharing situations or in listening to, and perhaps acting on, school or community injustices? Every aspect, from initial training and recruitment, through definitions of professionalism in the classroom, resources, assessement, and on to the pastoral care and personal development of teachers, will need long-term discussion and scrutiny. The necessary awareness and skill among teachers can be stimulated by professional links with disciplines and organisations at the roots of the metaphor (211).

In a society and an education system which is plural and diverse, the plurality within the metaphor must be understood and celebrated: the many different forms of therapy, and causes for liberation, offer potential for this metaphor to develop variants and accommodate them within the controlling framework provided by the therapeutic-liberative understandings of the learner, the knowledge and the subject.

Most evolutions in religious education have come about through a combination of official thinking, academic influence, and gradual public acceptance of some intangible *geist*. I hope that therapeutic-liberative religious education, or something like it, may succeed by the same route. If so, we shall see in classrooms a wealth of experiences reflecting and confirming the next phase of the human search for well-being and justice.

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